INNOCENTS' DAY ADDRESSES

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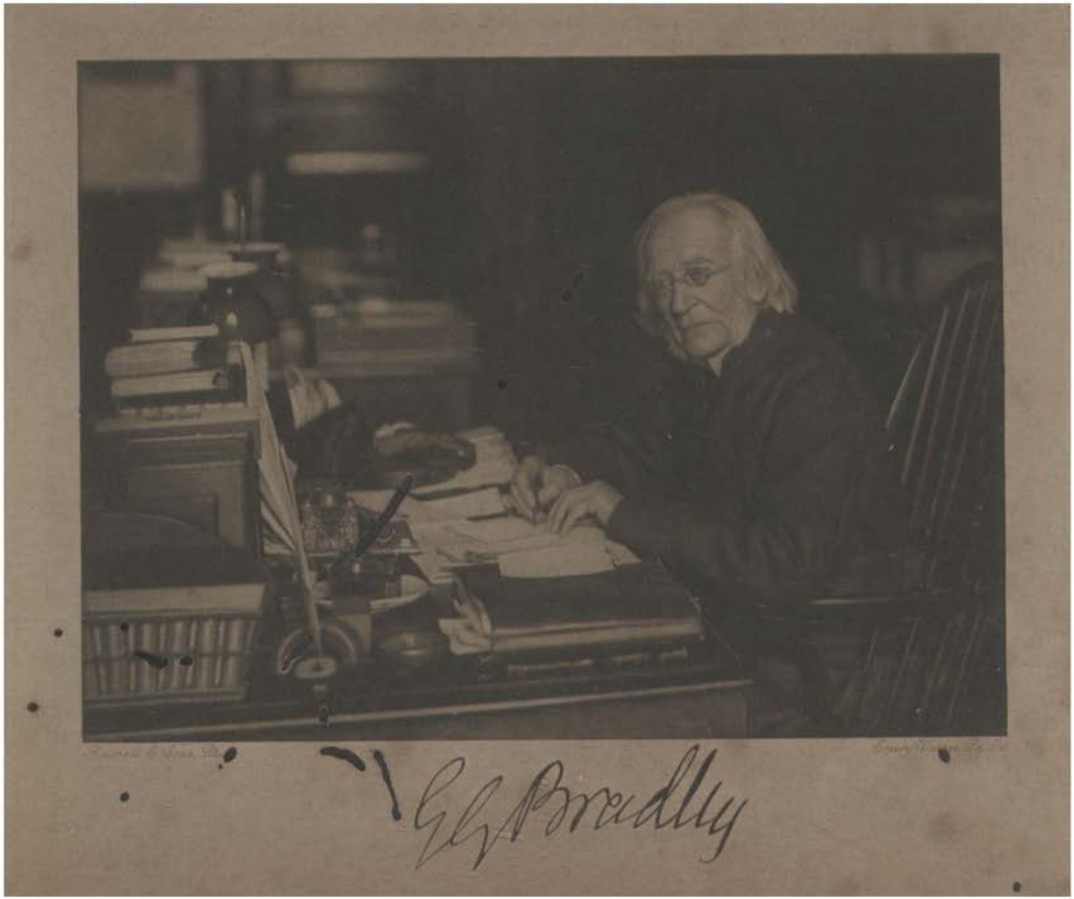
E. G. Bradley

INNOCENTS' DAY ADDRESSES

DELIVERED

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

BY GEORGE GRANVILLE BRADLEY

SOMETIME

DEAN OF WESTMINSTER

67573
,c

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1904

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PREFACE

THE special service for children, which was formerly held in Westminster Abbey on the afternoon of Holy Innocents' Day, was instituted by Dean Stanley on December 28, 1871, and from that time until his death, ten years later, it was the Dean's habit to address the children himself on these occasions, upon some subject suited to their understanding. My father found a particular pleasure in continuing this custom; and during the twenty-one years that he held the office of Dean of Westminster (1881-1902) he was only twice, each time owing to illness, absent from the Abbey pulpit on the afternoon of Innocents' Day. He sometimes complained that too many seats were occupied by their elders, which should have been devoted exclusively to the use of the children, but to the ordinary observer of the rows of upturned

faces this was not too apparent. The service was a shortened form of Evening Prayer: the lesson, the psalms, and the hymns were specially selected, and at the conclusion a collection was made for the Destitute Children's Dinner Fund.

As will be seen from the following addresses, my father did not attempt to inculcate doctrine. He merely endeavoured to instil into the hearts and minds of the children the teaching of Christ, as he understood it, in its most beautiful and at the same time its simplest and most comprehensible form. He tried to shew them what lessons of love, unselfishness, courage, and humility might be learnt from the example of Christ's life, and from the lives of those who most closely followed in His footsteps. And since my father always wished to arouse and stimulate the interest of his young hearers in their great National Church and its monuments, he drew much of his teaching of practical Christianity from the lives and examples of good and great men, beginning with Edward the Confessor, who lie buried within the Abbey walls, or have had monuments raised to

their memory, and even from the legends of the saints which may be found sculptured in the stone-work. He delighted to tell the children stories, historical and otherwise, which should inspire them with high ideals, quicken their imaginations, and enlarge their sympathies. It is only his last address on "Brotherly Love," delivered on Innocents' Day, 1901, a few months before the failing health of old age obliged him to resign the Deanery, that is entirely without anecdote. On this occasion it was my father's wish to speak a few parting words of plain advice to the children, in whom his interest was always keen, and many of whom had listened to him in former years.

The following series is, unfortunately, not complete. The manuscript of more than one address has been entirely lost, and in several, delivered at intervals of some years, there was considerable repetition, due both to the similarity of treatment inseparable from addresses delivered on a recurring festival, and to an ever-changing congregation.

It was necessary to omit these repetitions from a published book; but it is hoped that the

series has benefited accordingly, and that it may be found of interest not only to those to whom, as children, it was my father's pleasure to speak from the pulpit of Westminster Abbey, but also to the children of to-day and to-morrow, to whom he can only be a name.

ROSE M. BRADLEY.

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INNOCENTS' DAY ADDRESSES

I

THE BIRTHDAY OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Remember the days of old.—DEUT. xxxii. 7.

MY DEAR CHILDREN,

Let me begin by reminding you why this day, the day on which it has been the custom for many years to hold a service in Westminster Abbey especially for you, is called Innocents' Day. You know that we have just kept Christmas Day—the day on which Christian people, young and old, delight to remember that our Saviour Christ was born at Bethlehem. It is good for us to remember, not once a year only, but day by day, all that we owe to *those days of old*, to the coming on earth of the Lord Jesus; but it is well to keep one day in each year apart, especially to remind us of His birth. Just in

the same way, it is well that you should, day by day, enjoy and be thankful for the kindness and affection of your parents and friends; but it is well also, that once a year, when birthdays come round, you should receive and give especial marks of love and goodwill. These anniversaries, as we call them, are good and wholesome for us all alike.

On the day that follows Christmas Day, we are taught especially to remember the martyr Stephen. He was the first of the "noble army of martyrs," and he was stoned to death because he would not deny his Master, Christ. And so his name has become famous in all ages, and is honoured in all Christian countries. And the day following St. Stephen's Day is set apart to the memory of the Apostle whom Jesus so dearly loved, the Apostle St. John, to whom all Christian people owe so much. And so we come to Holy Innocents' Day, this day on which we are told to call to mind, not any brave or holy man, but a number of little children, mere infants, whose names are quite unknown to us, and who were cruelly massacred by King Herod, in the hope, the vain hope, that among them might be the infant Jesus.

You can easily understand why good men

of old chose a day so close to our Saviour's birth-day, on which to hand on the memory of those innocent children who were slaughtered for the sake of that divine Babe. We do well, all of us, to remember that our blessed Saviour was once a little Child, and grew up, as we are expressly told, obedient to His human parents—and it is good for us, also, to remember all that we are told of His love and tenderness for children. And as we think of these things, it has seemed right that there should be one service in the year in Westminster Abbey, the most famous of English churches, set apart for the children who were so dear to our Lord when He was on earth, and who are, we may be sure, no less dear to Him after 1900 years.

You all know the story of that terrible deed which we commemorate to-day. It was one of the very last acts of King Herod's life and reign. He thought himself a great king, and had done much to try and make his name remembered as such. He had spent vast sums on enlarging, almost rebuilding, the Temple at Jerusalem, and would have rejoiced to be remembered as another Solomon. But we remember him for only one thing to-day. He had heard that an Infant had

been born whom wise men, said to be able to foresee the future, had come from far to hail as the future King of the Jews. He saw, therefore, in this helpless Babe, a danger to himself and his family, and it cost him nothing—seemed to him, indeed, to be the most natural course—to get rid of such a danger at any price to others. It was far better, he thought, first by dint of one or two falsehoods to get this new-born Babe into his power, and, when this trickery failed, to order a number of little children, strangers to himself, to be got rid of, butchered like lambs, than to endanger his own crown for the sake of their lives and the feelings of their poor mothers. He little thought, that crafty and cowardly king, how, for ages after, millions of human beings would think of his name only in connection with that inhuman act, done by him perhaps without a scruple, whilst the Babe whom he wished but failed to slay would rule over a wider empire than he had ever dreamed of. It was, as you must all feel, a savage deed of King Herod's, worthy of a wild beast, and the sense of pity and tenderness for these poor babes has been so strong, that Christian people in many lands still keep the memory of their death-day as sacred.

So cruel, so horrid was the massacre of these Innocents felt to be, that there have been times, when, by some people, this anniversary was considered to be, as they would call it, unlucky. Just as you have heard of seamen and others who do not like to begin a voyage on a Friday, being the day of the week on which Christ was crucified, so this day, December 28th, was in some parts of the world thought to be a day on which it was not well to begin any fresh work, or to start on a long voyage, however calm the sea might appear to be.

We, my dear children, may think very differently of this day. For this was the day upon which, more than eight hundred years ago, the great church of the Abbey of Westminster was solemnly dedicated to the Apostle St. Peter, and consecrated to the worship of God. It is the death-day of those poor children at Bethlehem and their *birthday*, as we would rather call it, into the unseen Kingdom of Heaven. For the souls of those little ones were very dear in the sight of their Father in Heaven—dearer even, than to their mothers, who wept, and might well weep, like Rachel, and refused to be comforted.

So to-day is also the birthday of Westminster

Abbey, not of the actual church which you may see to-day, but of the older building, which stood upon exactly the same spot where the present one now stands. Some of you have perhaps heard that the original Norman Church and the monastery attached to it, were built by King Edward the Confessor, that monarch of pious and gentle memory, in fulfilment of a vow made to the Pope at Rome. He took great pains with the church, but very little of his work is now to be seen—nothing, indeed, but the bases of some pillars in that part which we call the Sanctuary. In the cloisters near the entrance to the Chapter House, you may still see some low doors, leading into vaulted rooms which were beneath the dormitory of the monks of Edward the Confessor's day. As you may imagine, the Abbey, which was large, although not nearly so large as it is now, took a long time to build—fifteen years; and, by the time it was finished, King Edward was no longer young, and he had been taken seriously ill. On the 28th of December, 1065, the day when the church was being consecrated with great ceremony, the king lay dying in the Palace of Westminster, which he had also built, close by. He died on January 5, 1066, and

THE NORMAN CLOISTER.

[*To face p.* 6.

was buried before the High Altar in his new church.

Some two hundred years later, King Henry III., who built the greater part of the Abbey as you see it to-day, moved the remains of his sainted predecessor to the most sacred and honoured part of his more stately church, where they now rest aloft in the beautiful shrine which he had reared to receive them. On October 13, 1269, King Henry III. himself, his brother Richard, King of the Romans, and his four sons, bore the coffin which contained the Confessor's body on their shoulders to the Abbey, from Westminster Palace, where it had been taken while the new Church was building. And there King Edward lies now, as he has lain for many hundreds of years in that lofty tomb, behind the High Altar. For centuries pilgrimages were made on October 13th, to a lesser extent are still made, to the tomb of the sainted monarch, the steps of which are worn away by the knees of pilgrims. There he lies, surrounded by the humbler tombs of warlike kings, whose highest honour was to be laid in death round the shrine of that most peaceful and unwarlike sovereign. And now I am going to tell you a very strange

and curious story, a legend as we say, that has come down to us from those early times, *those days of old*, of which my text speaks. I do not give it you as a true story, nor as a piece of history, but I think it is interesting for more than one reason. It tells us how, in a rough and hard time, when this island had been long the scene of fierce and bloody wars between different races, Britons and Saxons, English and Danes, and later between the English and their Norman conquerors, the teaching of Christ Jesus had so far done its work, as to make men honour mercifulness, gentleness, pity for the poor, forgiveness, and childlike innocence, even above valour in war and fighting. It is one of the many stories which were told in old days of King Edward the Confessor, and it has come down to us in the form of a long and rhymed poem, written in old French, such as the Normans spoke, and dedicated to Alianore—Eleanor, as we should call her—of Provence, the wife of King Henry III., who lies in his tomb above ground on the north side of the shrine where he himself had placed the body of the Confessor, with Queen Eleanor beyond him. This poem shows us the manner of man which Edward the Confessor was believed

to be, by those who lived nearly two hundred years later; merciful and gentle-hearted, a true saint, as he was soon declared to be, worthy of the title of St. Edward.

King Edward had passed nearly the whole of his life beyond the sea in Normandy, in poverty and in exile, while the Danes who had conquered, ruled England. But at last, when both the unworthy sons of the great Danish King Canute were dead, the people, high and low, called to the throne Edward, the son of Ethelred, the descendant of the good King Alfred. And the poem tells us how, at the time of the death of the Danish kings,—

> "Edward stays beyond the sea,
> Grieving, pensive, sad, and mournful,
> Carrying in his heart a dart of grief."

Suddenly he was called back to England, crowned and anointed as king, welcomed by his people, and honoured by all the kings of Europe. "French, Germans, and Lombards, all," says the poem, "desire to see King Edward." And it goes on to tell us in quaint language, how his treasurer and courtiers thought to gladden the new king, who knew so well what poverty meant, by showing him the riches of which he was

now the possessor. So they took him into his Treasury, and showed him large barrels, or casks, filled with gold and silver coins, "the yellow gold and the white silver," that had been raised by heavy and oppressive taxes from the English people. They thought that Edward would be delighted at the sight, but they were mistaken. The king, says this strange story, saw another sight; he saw a fiend, or demon, or evil spirit, sitting on the treasure, "mocking and sporting" at the misery caused by this taxation. King Edward felt not joy, but sorrow. It brought to his mind the sufferings of his poor subjects, from whom this treasure had been extorted by covetous and cruel oppression, under the name of the Danish tax—a tax, that is, intended to build ships with which to fight the Danish pirates, —whereas the money had really been piled up in the king's Treasury.

So, continues the poem, Edward's heart was sad to think that one and another king had pillaged and despoiled his own people, and for that treasure he had no care, but caused it to be returned, and no more to be exacted.

> "And from his people he had blessing
> And high guerdon and reward from God."

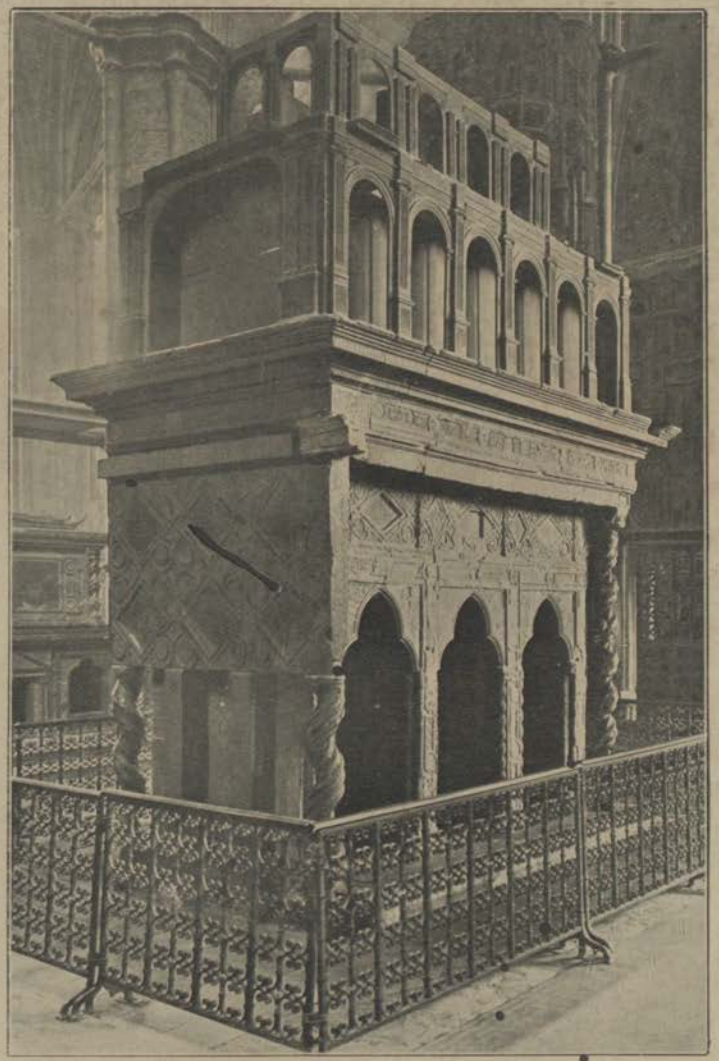
You will understand that this act of the king's seemed a kind of preaching of the gospel of Christ in his day, and that the story was better than a sermon. It is really a parable put into a form which all can understand, telling us how people were beginning to feel, even in those days, that there was, after all, something more heavenly, nearer to God, and dearer to man, in relieving distress and in helping the poor, than in the beating down of enemies, the oppression of the poor, or the conquering of foreigners. And just as this more stately and beautiful Abbey of Westminster has grown in the course of centuries out of the smaller Norman church of King Edward, so we may hope that the gospel of our Lord has grown and spread in the hearts of men; and since, unlike any earthly building, it cannot be limited by the work of human hands, we hope that, in centuries yet to come, the Kingdom of Christ may conquer all the ends of the earth, and His teaching find ever riper understanding and better fulfilment in men's hearts.

In my next address I shall tell you some further stories of this pious and simple-minded sovereign, whose examples in many respects we shall all do well to remember. I should like to

think that my words to-day may help you in the midst of your own pleasures and enjoyments, to think sometimes of those who are less happy than yourselves. Those little ones who were slain by the cruel Herod were mourned and wept by loving mothers, but they passed at once into the keeping of a Heavenly Father, and "hunger no more, neither thirst any more."

But there are many children now in England who know only too well what hunger and weakness mean, and who have little shelter from the bitter cold and drenching rain, and perhaps little love and kindness in their homes.

Will you try, when you *remember the days of old*, to spare them a thought of pity? And may you learn early to remember the words of the Lord Jesus: "Forasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto Me."



SHRINE OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

[*To face p.* 13.

II

THE POWER OF GENTLENESS
KING EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

And a little child shall lead them.—Isa. xi. 6.

My text is a very short one. You can easily say over the words, and remember them. But I do not care for you to remember just six or seven words, unless they carry with them one or two good thoughts which may help you to be better and happier when you think of what you have heard to-day. Let me tell you first what my text means in the place where it stands in your Bibles. It comes at the end of a verse in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah which runs as follows:—

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together: that is, the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the fat calf and the young lion shall all

live together and lie down together; and then come the words, *and a little child shall lead them.*

The prophet, a holy man who lived many hundreds of years before Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, is drawing a picture of the good days that were to come after he himself "was gone to God."

A King, he says, shall be born one day, of the family of Jesse and of David. He shall take the part of the poor and of the oppressed. He shall draw to Him all the world, not the Jews only; and in His reign *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* You can see that the words point to the reign, not then established, of Him whose birthday we celebrate on Christmas Day, the Lord Jesus Christ, who taught us to say to our Father in heaven, *Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

And in telling us what kind of a change would come to pass under this good and holy King, the prophet uses words which, though they were spoken between two and three thousand years ago, we can all understand. He draws for us, as it were, a picture in words, which he

intends to be an emblem or a parable of his meaning, and to set us thinking as to what his meaning may be. So he chooses three savage animals, the wolf, the leopard, and the lion, which you, no doubt, have seen in cages or enclosures, and been warned not to go too near, but which in the prophet's day, as in many countries now, roamed about, seeking what they might devour. Each of these animals he shows us as lying down quietly and peaceably with such defenceless creatures as lambs and kids and calves, which they usually tear to pieces without mercy.

You can fancy yourselves seeing such a picture in a book, and thinking it very strange, but you would understand if you were told that its meaning was that there would be a great change for the better in the whole world; that the very fiercest and cruelest of God's creatures would learn to live at peace with the gentlest and most harmless of them all.

But the prophet who paints this picture for us has not yet finished. There is something still stranger to come. Let us look again, and we shall see a fresh picture, in which the wolf, the leopard, and the lion are no longer merely lying down with the lamb and the kid, but we shall

see these ferocious beasts being led about, following obediently the tottering steps of some little child. You have heard, of course, that these creatures can be tamed and subdued to some extent by a strong man, a lion-tamer, as we call him, who is not afraid to go into their cages with a bar of iron in his hand and make them crouch before him. But what we see in the prophet's picture is something quite different. It is rather as though we saw one of the very smallest of you holding a string in your little hand, and leading, let us say, the king of beasts, who obediently follows you about. And under this wonderful picture the prophet writes the words of my text, *and a little child shall lead them.*

But we must not merely amuse ourselves by fancying a picture unlike anything that could be seen in real life, for no one has ever yet seen wolves lying down with lambs, nor lions and leopards being led by little children. Let us now try to understand the words as they were meant, as a kind of parable, a story to teach us something behind and beyond itself. Let us put away the thoughts of these wild beasts, and of these little children, and let us ask whether the words have ever come true in another sense.

Nineteen hundred years have gone by since the child Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and since those innocent babes, the Holy Innocents, were put to death by wolves in human shape. Has it ever happened that fierce and strong men, whose hearts, as the poet says, were "stubborn as the steel they wore," men who naturally chose for their badges and banners, figures of beasts and birds of prey, the lion, the leopard, and the eagle, have been subdued and submissive, not to mere strength and courage, nor to some mighty conqueror or tamer of men, but to one who compared with themselves, had all the gentleness and the innocence, and much of the weakness of a little child? If so, you will like to know how such strange things could come to pass. You know how Jesus Christ came into the world, and how He, our rightful Lord and Master and King, took our nature upon Him in the form of a little child, and how, as He grew up to manhood, He taught men that gentleness and kindness, and tenderness, and forgiveness of evil, were better things, sometimes more really courageous, than physical boldness and revenge and power. He Himself was called the Lamb of God, He Himself told His disciples to become as little

children. He died forgiving His murderers and praying for them. And though men rejected Him and crucified Him, yet His words and His example sank deep, and as time went on deeper, into their hearts. We all know how sometimes good words which we have slighted at the time come back to us hours, days, or even years afterwards, and make us feel ashamed and sad. So His words have come back age after age to the hearts of men, and they have come to know that the child whom the prophet saw was no other than the Babe who was born at Bethlehem, our Saviour Christ Jesus.

In my last address I told you a legend which has come down to us of King Edward the Confessor, and I tried to show you how, even in those rough times, it was proved that Jesus Christ had not lived and died in vain, since, though there was much ignorance and much wickedness, as there is even now, yet men had learned to honour and to reverence qualities which before had been despised. And I am going to tell you two or three more of the stories of this king, a king of many human faults, and yet unlike any other sovereign whom the people had known or seen on the throne before.

Edward the Confessor was called the Confessor because people held that, though not a martyr, yet he had *confessed Christ*, and suffered for Him. He had lived, as I told you before, in poverty and exile across the sea, forgotten and neglected by his own mother, who had married the Danish King of England. He had grown up very unlike the young princes and knights of his day, caring indeed for hunting and hawking, but for little else except the service and worship of God. Meantime England had been, says an old chronicler, "like a sheepfold delivered up to lions and wolves," and when the last of the Danish rulers died, the people were glad enough to call back one whom they felt to be bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh.

Edward the Confessor reigned over England peacefully for twenty-four years. Then followed the terrible days of the Norman Conquest, when people said "that fiends went through the land with fire and sword in their hands." And you can imagine how under the hard foreign masters who came after, bearing such names as William, Henry, Richard—foreign names then, though English enough now—the people liked to remember the last of their own old English line, the

gentle, sainted king, with his snow-white beard and hair, his white hands with their long slender fingers, and the delicate colour in his cheeks.

I told you last time a story of the king's treasure. Now I am going to tell you quite a different one on the same subject.

One afternoon, Edward was tired and lay down on his bed to rest and sleep; and by his bedside was a huge chest in which gold and silver coins were kept by his treasurer, Hugo, or Hugolin.

Now Hugolin had taken out some money with which to pay the king's officers, and had forgotten to shut and lock the great money-chest. He had hardly gone, when a poor servant employed in the royal kitchen, a "scullion" as such men were called, slipped in, and, thinking that King Edward was fast asleep, he helped himself to some money, went out, hid it, and first peeping in to satisfy himself that the king was, as he thought, still asleep, he returned for more. Now the king was not really asleep, and he saw the thief do this twice over; but at the third time he called out, "Fly, make haste! for if Hugolin comes in he will not leave you one halfpenny." And when Hugolin came in and

missed the money, the king said, "Say nothing; he who has it needed it more than the king does." You must remember that in those days punishments were very cruel. If the scullion had been taken up, he would not have been sent to prison, as now, but he would have been put to a horrible death. His skin would have been torn bit by bit from his whole body, and fastened against the wall of the King's Treasury as a warning to others. Let us hope that this poor thief's heart was touched by the king's forgiveness, and that he never stole again. There are some hearts that great and undeserved kindness will make to feel shame and sorrow, who learn to love much because much has been forgiven them. Try yourselves some day the effect of a kind word, when some one, weaker perhaps than you are, has treated you wrongly and unjustly. But if ever you are yourselves forgiven a fault, do not think the less, but rather the more of the wrong you have done.

One of those who told the tale many hundred years ago, said that no one had ever been so merciful and simple since Jesus forgave the thief who was crucified on His right hand at Calvary. And now we will have a story of the king's

kindness to the sick and the miserable. I should rather call it a legend, for only the first part of it could, I think, be quite true.

King Edward was leaving his palace with all his great men and nobles round him, when a poor miserable cripple, an Irishman, "thin, deformed, feeble, and weary"—I am telling it all to you in the words of the chronicle—with legs bent and twisted, and feet withered and turned the wrong way, cried sadly to Hugo, or Hugolin, the treasurer, of whom you have already heard, and entreated him to take a message to the king. It was to tell the king that, though he could now only move by dragging himself along, face downwards, with his chest on a stool, yet that he had been told that if the king would carry him to the Church of St. Peter, the little church on the site of which Edward was then building Westminster Abbey, he would be healed. And the king came to the poor cripple, and though people cried out at his terrible deformity and rags and dirt, he took him up on his shoulders and carried him, in spite of his own royal robes, till he was quite tired, all the way to the church, and put him down before the altar. And then, says the story, came a great miracle, like those of

which we read in the Bible. The poor man's legs grew straight and strong quite suddenly, and his flesh came sound again, and he hung up his stool in the church and went on foot across Europe all the way to Rome, to give thanks at the tomb of St. Peter.

And there is one more of these legends I should like to tell you, as strange as any fairy tale, but exceedingly beautiful.

King Edward was away from home at the dedication of a church to the Apostle St. John, the Apostle whom Jesus loved. A poor man came to him and implored him to relieve his wants, for the sake of that Apostle. The king was much distressed, for he had no money with him, and the crowd was so great that he could not find his treasurer. But on his finger he had a very fine royal gold ring; so, as his heart yearned over this poor shivering and starving man, he took the ring off and gave it to him. The beggar disappeared, and the story might have ended there, but the marvellous part of it is yet to come. Soon after, or according to one story, that very same evening, far away in the Holy Land, two English pilgrims, who had travelled thousands of miles to see Jerusalem

and the place where Jesus died and was buried—the Holy Sepulchre, as it is called—had lost their way. Night came on; they were tired and foot-sore. They did not know which way to turn; cold and hunger and a great dread of wild beasts and robbers seized upon them. Suddenly the darkness became full of light, and with a band of youths carrying lights before him, a venerable old man with white hair and a very sweet and gracious countenance, came and saluted them, and asked who they were and what they were doing. They told him that they came from England, and were subjects of the good King Edward, and had come to pray for forgiveness of their sins in the very place where Jesus Christ had lived and died. And the old man said that for the love of King Edward he would take good care of them. So he led them to a pleasant house, where they found supper prepared and welcome beds and all comforts. And in the morning their host took them to the gate of the City, and they saw of a sudden what they might have guessed before, that he was no mere man. "I," he said, "am the Apostle and Evangelist St. John. Go back to England; I will protect you on the way. Take this ring;" and he gave

them a royal ring from his finger. "It is King Edward's; he gave it to me when I asked mercy of him in the form of a beggar. Take it to your king, and tell him it is from the Apostle whom Jesus loved. He will know it again, and believe you; and tell him that within six months he shall be with me in Paradise, where Jesus is." So the two *Palmers* (as they were called, because pilgrims to the Holy Land used to gather a branch of palm there, and carry it in their hands) came back in time to their own country, and gave the king the message and the ring. The king and queen were sitting at table with Earl Harold, afterwards the gallant King Harold, who was killed at the battle of Hastings less than a year after the death of Edward, when the two tired pilgrims came in, leaning on their staves. And the king knew that it was time for him to die, and to be with Christ and with those who had already gone to Him.

And after his death, so great was the impression made by the child-like character of this tender-hearted king, not only upon his own age but on those which followed, that in the most savage times which came after, the English people loved to tell one another of his kindness

and goodness, qualities as rare as they were welcome amongst the great of the land. And the stories which men told grew, as such stories are apt to grow, from what was true to what was partly fancy. They could not be content with the truth, but believed all kinds of wonderful and marvellous stories of his goodness. And as very few could read or write in those days, some of the tales which they told of him were rudely carved in stone, and can be seen now on the screen of the chapel where his shrine has been reared in Westminster Abbey.*

I have told you these stories, my dear children, which are very unlike other popular tales which have come down to us about the warlike prowess of kings and heroes, in the hope that they may help you to see a fresh meaning in the words of my text. Piety, tenderness, pity for the poor and the distressed, are as much royal virtues as courage and strength and kingly

* "The ancient stone screen (at the back of the High Altar) which closes the west side of this (St. Edward's) chapel, has been generally attributed to the reign of Henry VI., but is now believed, from internal evidence, to belong to the reign of Edward IV., fifteenth century. Upon the frieze are sculptured the principal events, real and imaginary, of Edward the Confessor's life" ("Deanery Guide").

wisdom. And it is not only to kings and queens that such stories speak; they may remind us that we are all, young and old, servants of Christ, and that He would have us gentle and forgiving, unselfish and generous. You will think sometimes of this child-like king, merciful, simple, and kind, whose memory has been loved and revered by all the stronger kings who have come after him, leading the hearts of men who compared to him were indeed as lions and leopards, helping to prove for all time the truth of those wonderful words: *And a little child shall lead them.*

III

SOME CHILDREN IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

And yet there is room.—ST. LUKE xiv. 22.

I AM not going to say anything to you to-day, my dear children, of that parable of our Lord, from which my short text is taken. You may remember that the words were spoken by some servants, who had been sent out by their master to bring in guests to fill the empty places at his banquet: "Lord," they said, "it is done as Thou hast commanded, *and yet there is room.*" I am only going to speak to you of the last few words of their message, and try perhaps to give these a fresh meaning.

You know very well that Westminster Abbey is the most famous of English churches, and has held for ages the graves and the monuments of kings and of great men. And you can easily fancy some one, long ago, going through the list

of those who were one day to be honoured with burial there—sovereigns and rulers, statesmen, wise men and poets, soldiers and sailors, preachers and missionaries — and you can fancy this imaginary person saying, when the list seemed to be completed: *And yet there is room* in this Christian Church for something quite different. There is room for the children who have passed away too young to serve their country, but not too young to die; not too young to be remembered and grieved for; not too young to be dear to God and to Christ.

And so it is; there *is* room in the Abbey for such, and there are many graves there, you will find, of young children, boys and girls, of all ages, from first babyhood to the limits of childhood.

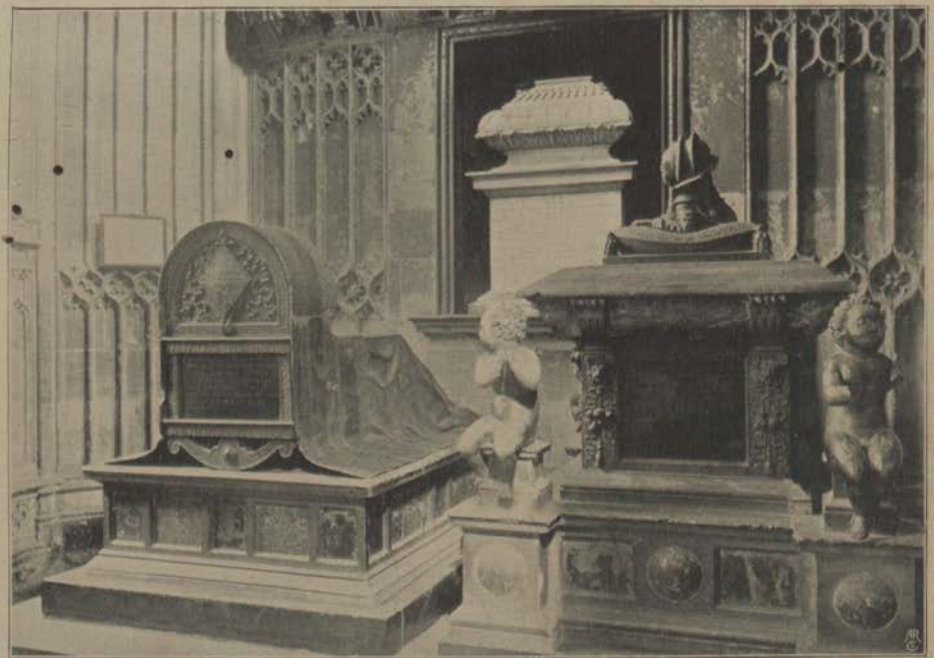
I propose to tell you to-day the story of one or two of these children; firstly, of two little girls, called away by God in infancy, and secondly of two young boys, slain, if history tells us true, by hands as cruel as those of King Herod.

Pass with me if you can, in your thoughts, to the very end of the great Abbey Church behind the High Altar. Here we shall walk beneath the shadow of the tombs of kings, treading at every

step on the graves of great men. And so we shall come to the wide flight of steps which leads up into the chapel of Henry VII. There, too, all around us will be graves. Before us we shall see the tomb of King Edward VI., and beyond him that of his grandfather, the Welsh king, Henry Tudor,* who built the chapel, and of the first Scottish King of England, James I., his great grandson, whose reign made England and Scotland one. But we must turn aside from these, and passing close by the tomb of Queen Elizabeth, we shall reach a spot, which was named by the late Dean Stanley *Innocent's Corner*, even as another and more famous corner of the Abbey is called *Poet's Corner*. And why this name? It was because those who had raised the stately monument near by to the Queen† under whom England had grown to a greatness hitherto unknown, felt that even there, at the very end of the vault where Elizabeth and her sister Queen Mary lie, there was room for the little children of whom I am going to speak to you. Before you, if you were there, you would

* Henry VII.

† Queen Elizabeth, whose tomb was erected by James I.



INNOCENTS' CORNER.

[*To face p.* 30.

see the monuments of two little girls, their effigies carved in marble. Their bodies lie buried beneath where you would stand. One is a child of little more than two years, the other a baby of only two days old: "just born, baptized, and died." The elder little girl lies on her side, with her head raised up and resting on one small hand. She is dressed in the strange fashion of a royal child of three hundred years ago, the stiff-pointed bodice and the full hooped skirt. She was the dearly loved little daughter of James I., and she was christened Mary after her grandmother, Mary Queen of Scots, whose tomb is on the further side of this same chapel. She was the first of his children who was born after he came to England, and she was the first royal child who had been born in England since Edward VI. Her father King James, loved her dearly, but at two years old she fell ill, and there was no hope of her recovery. And as death drew near we are told how again and again the little girl murmured "I go, I go, I go away," as though she heard the call to another and an unseen world. And when she was dead,* her father, full of grief, laid her, his little Mary, in the chapel dedicated to the Virgin

* Princess Mary died 1607.

Mary, side by side with her baby sister. For the other baby effigy is that of the infant Princess Sophia, born after her sister Mary, but called away before her.* "The royal Rosebud," says her epitaph, "snatched away from her parents to blossom again in the rose-garden of Christ." And her cradle monument, with the little face on the pillow, and the lace edging of the coverlet all carved in marble, has touched the hearts of many who have seen it from that day to this.

But these children were taken away from some dark days that were in store for their family. Their eldest brother, Prince Henry, the hope of the royal household and of the nation, died a few years later at St. James' Palace at the age of eighteen,† and was laid to rest in the tomb of his grandmother, Mary Queen of Scots, in this same chapel. Their second brother, King Charles I., was beheaded, as you know, at Whitehall. And in the same vault as Prince Henry, lie the bones of his nephew, Henry Duke of Gloucester,‡ the little boy who sat on King Charles's knee before his execution, and declared

* Died 1606.

† Died 1612.

‡ Youngest son of King Charles I.; died of small-pox at Whitehall in 1660.

that he would be "torn in pieces" rather than disobey his father's bidding. There are other children of Charles I. buried here also. One of these was the Princess Anne,* who was said to be a very wise little lady, "above her age," and who died when not quite four years old. "Being told to pray by those about her at the last, 'I am not able,' saith she, 'to say my long prayer'—meaning the Lord's Prayer—'but I will say my short one, Lighten mine eyes, O Lord, lest I sleep the sleep of death.' This done, the little lamb gave up her spirit," and passed peacefully into her heavenly Father's keeping. In this same vault lies the body of the Lady Arabella Stuart,† a cousin of those baby girls whose effigies I have described to you, and who was the godmother of one of them and the chief mourner at the funeral of the other. She was, however, cruelly imprisoned by their father, James I., and was at last brought to rest here after a sad life of misery and misfortune. Here also lies their eldest sister, Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, the "Queen of Hearts," as she was

* Died 1640.

† Daughter of Charles, Earl of Lennox, first cousin of James I., and looked upon as a possible claimant to the throne; died in 1615.

called, who married Frederick, Elector Palatine, the unhappy "Winter King," and was the grandmother of George I. She died nearly sixty years later * than her little sisters, and at one time her fate had seemed very happy, but, as your history books will tell you she came home discrowned and widowed. Here also rests her son, Prince Rupert, who fought so gallantly for his uncle, Charles I., in the Civil Wars.

This vault, the Stuart vault, as it is called, is a very large one, and there are many little royal children buried in it. Charles II. lost no less than ten, who are all here, and Queen Anne a still greater number, all of whom died when quite infants, except her little son William, Duke of Gloucester, who lived until he was eleven years old, and then died of "a fever occasioned," it is said, "by excessive dancing on his birthday." †

But I must take you back in imagination to the tombs of those two baby princesses, who, as you have seen, were called away to their Father and their God from the evil times that were in store for their kindred. And now if you were to stand in the same place by their side, and raise your eyes, you would see against the wall immediately

* Died 1661. † Died 1700.

above them a marble urn with a Latin inscription. This urn holds the bones of two young boys, whose story is one of the saddest in the whole of English history. We must go back four centuries, back to a fierce and bloody time, when England was divided against England in what are called the *Wars of the Roses*, and when civil war and massacres on both sides had made men's hearts hard as iron. It was a time when, of the great men of England, young and old, by far the greater number fell on the field of battle, or were cruelly beheaded or murdered in cold blood after the fight was over. The story begins when the weak Lancastrian King, Henry VI., the founder of Eton College, and the son of the Warrior King, Henry V., whose saddle and helmet some of you can see even now,* had been driven from the throne in favour of King Edward IV. of the House of York. But for the moment King Edward was in his turn dispossessed. He had to fly the kingdom, and to leave his wife, Elizabeth Woodville, as she was called, from her name before her marriage, unprotected in London. And in the autumn of 1470 the Queen, with her

* Henry V.'s shield, saddle, and helmet are suspended on a wooden bar in the chantry over his tomb.

three little girls, fled for refuge to Westminster Abbey. The Abbey and the space around it were held so sacred that even the boldest tyrant, it was said, dared not molest or drag away any one who had once been admitted to what was known as the *Sanctuary* of Westminster. The name Broad Sanctuary still remains in the open space outside the Church, where Westminster Hospital now stands. And here in "Sanctuary" Elizabeth Woodville lived for many months, and here was born and baptized her eldest son, one of the two boys whose bones lie within the urn of which I have spoken. The Abbot and the Prior stood as his godfathers, and he was christened Edward, after his father, in the darkest hour of whose reign he was born. But in the coming spring King Edward IV. regained his throne. I must not stop to tell you of the great Battle of Barnet, fought on Easter Sunday, 1471, where the Earl of Warwick, the king-maker, was slain; nor of that of Tewkesbury, at which Edward, the only son of Henry VI., was killed after the fighting was over.

The baby who had been born in the Sanctuary of Westminster was a young prince, twelve and a half years old when his father, Edward IV.,

was called away by death. Like all the other eldest sons of the kings of England, the boy bore the title of Prince of Wales, and when Edward IV. died,* he was living at Ludlow Castle in Shropshire, under the care of his uncle, Lord Rivers, his mother's brother, her son, his half-brother Richard Gray, and other faithful friends of the now widowed queen. Why was he so far from home, so far from Windsor and from London?

We are told the reason by Sir Thomas More, a good and famous Englishman, who wrote his story both in Latin and in English. He was himself a little child at the time, and fifty years later, in 1534, he was imprisoned in what is now the Deanery of Westminster previous to his own execution. The reason was, he says, because the then unruly and turbulent Welshmen "paid more respect and obedience to a boy *Prince of Wales* than to the oldest magistrates."

And so young Edward had been sent to live on the borders of Wales that he might keep order by his mere presence. But that boy prince was now, by his father's death, King of England, and as such he was proclaimed under the title which

* Edward IV. died at Westminster, April 9th, 1483.

he bears in history, of Edward V. His mother felt that no time must be lost in bringing him safe to London, that he might be crowned like all the kings who had gone before him in Westminster Abbey. So she sent a message to her brother, and to his other guardians to escort him at once to London, accompanied by a guard of faithful soldiers. But the young king's uncle, on his father's side, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, had already, we are told, designs on the crown for himself. So he travelled up from Yorkshire, and at Northampton he met the Duke of Buckingham and other nobles who were jealous of the queen and of her relations, and who had brought, as they said, "many stout fellows to support him." And he wrote to the queen, with whom he had always pretended to be friendly, and advised her on no account to let her son travel with an army of soldiers, as though England were an enemy's country, or else all the world would suspect her of evil designs against himself and all others in England who wished to be loyal subjects to their young sovereign.

So in an evil hour Elizabeth Woodville listened to his advice, and the little king rode at the end of April, from Ludlow towards North-

ampton with his uncle, Lord Rivers, and his half brother, a few friends, and only a small retinue of servants and attendants. And near Northampton, the Duke of Gloucester and the Duke of Buckingham met them and pleased the boy by their marks of affection and of homage. But they advised the little party, as the town was very full, to ride on to Stoney Statford, a stage of twelve miles nearer London. The Duke of Gloucester, however, begged the king's guardian, Lord Rivers, to come back to Northampton and to spend a pleasant evening with himself and Buckingham and his friends, so that the queen's relations and the other nobles might henceforth be on good terms, and all England might have peace.

Lord Rivers, like the Queen, his sister, was deceived. He left the young king in the care of his half-brother, Richard Gray, and his attendants, to rest at Stratford, and rode back himself to Northampton, where he was received with all signs of good fellowship and friendship. But the next morning he was seized, denounced as a traitor, and locked up by his untrustworthy hosts. Gloucester and Buckingham then rode forward to Stratford, where they found young

Edward, weary of waiting for his uncle, about to mount his pony and to continue his journey. They dismounted and fell each on a knee before him, doing him all outward homage. But they seized on Richard Grey, whom the boy loved much, and two or three of his faithful companions, calling them traitors, and, in spite of all that the poor young king could say or do, sent them back as prisoners to Northampton. These loyal friends were afterwards moved from prison to prison, until at last they were all cruelly beheaded at Pontefract in Yorkshire. Meantime the real traitors rode on to London, showing the boy king all signs of respect and reverence. At Hornsey they were met by the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, and Aldermen, and five hundred citizens of London, who had all ridden out to salute the new monarch, and they conducted him in state to a palace belonging to the Bishop of London, which then stood near the old St. Paul's Cathedral, burnt in the great fire of London.

We know but little of the poor boy's feelings, but what the queen-mother thought about the matter is told us at some length. The moment she heard of what had happened at Northampton, "she fell into despair," as well she might. It

was evening, but with her five daughters and her other son, a child of nine years old, little Richard, Duke of York, she did what she had done twelve years before, and came at once to Westminster Abbey to take sanctuary. She came in great haste, and when the Archbishop of York, who lived close by and was roused from sleep by tidings of the story, came to see her at midnight, he found the queen sitting disconsolate in the abbot's house on the rushes which were strewn in those days on the stone floors. It is supposed that she was in the abbot's dining hall, now called the College Hall, and used by the Westminster School boys.

The Archbishop tried in vain to comfort the queen. She felt sure that the Duke of Gloucester, now proclaimed Protector, would try to destroy her boys, and yet she felt equally sure that he would not dare to tear the younger one from so sacred a place. No tyrant, she declared, would take him from Sanctuary.

I must not make my story too long. It seemed, of course, a strange state of things that whilst one boy should be living in a palace, and called King Edward, and that all preparations should be made and the day actually fixed for his

coronation in Westminster Abbey, his brother should be hiding in that same Abbey, as if in danger of his life. So the Archbishop of Canterbury came over the water to Westminster, to persuade the queen to give up her younger boy, for whose company, they said, the young king was pining. Sir Thomas More gives a long account of the way in which the poor mother argued and pleaded and protested. But at last she was tired out, and yielded to the pressure that was put upon her, and, turning to the child, she said to him, "Farewell, my sweet son, mine own; the Almighty be thy Protector. Let me kiss thee once more before we part, for God knoweth when we shall kiss again." And so, having kissed him, she blessed him, and wept sore, and went her way, leaving the child weeping also. They never met again. The little boy was taken across to the Palace of Westminster, where you see the Houses of Parliament to-day, and was handed over to his uncle, "as a dove to a vulture," says one account, "as a lamb to the care of the wolf."

But Gloucester received the little boy with all tenderness, took him in his arms, kissed and cheered him, and then conveyed him to his

brother in the bishop's palace. So the two boys were once more together.

June 22nd was the date fixed for the young king's coronation, just seven weeks after he had arrived in London. Great preparations were in progress for the ceremony, and the young brothers were removed to the Tower of London, which in those days was both a prison and a palace, in order that they might come in procession thence by water to the Abbey when the coronation day should arrive. But from that day they never again left that gloomy and austere pile of buildings which many of you have been taken to see. The little king who had ridden such a few weeks before through spring flowers and budding trees all the way from Shropshire to London, never again breathed the fresh air even of the City. For meantime, his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, had, partly by fraud, partly by violence, gained over a large party to set aside his nephew, and to make himself king instead. And he was so successful, that on the very day on which the young Edward V. was to have sat in his coronation robes in the Abbey and had the crown placed on his head, he himself was proclaimed king as Richard III.

and on July 6th he and his queen, Anne of Warwick,* who had come also to the Tower, carried out the programme which was arranged for their nephew, going thence in full procession to Westminster Abbey, where they were crowned with great magnificence; after which they proceeded to York, and were crowned again.

And what, meantime, of the two boys, Edward V. and the little Duke of York? It is said that when the elder heard that his uncle was crowned king and his little cousin of ten years old had become Prince of Wales, he sighed and said, "Ah, if my uncle would let me have my life, he might take my kingdom!"

The children were well treated for a time, but they were soon kept in closer confinement, and the end was at hand.

Most of you have read the story that tells us how, when the boys were fast asleep, two ruffians smothered them with their pillows and bedclothes, and how their bodies were buried deep beneath a staircase. I need not, I think,

* Anne of Warwick was the widow of the young Prince Edward of Lancaster, who was killed at the battle of Tewkesbury. She was afterwards made to marry the Duke of Gloucester, Richard III.

tell you of the fate of the usurper, whose young son was soon lost to him by death, and who was killed himself in 1485, on the field of Bosworth, on which battlefield Henry VII., the first of the Tudor kings, was hastily crowned.

But generations passed away, and more than two hundred years after the birth of the young uncrowned King Edward V., the only king of England since the Norman Conquest who has not been crowned in Westminster Abbey, some men working in the Tower found, deep down under a flight of stairs, (you may have been shown the place) an old chest containing the bones of two young boys. There was every reason to believe that they were the bones of the two princes so cruelly murdered in a cruel age, and they were carefully collected and placed by order of King Charles II., who was then on the throne, in the urn which you may now see on the wall of Henry VII. Chapel, above the effigies of the little Stuart princesses.

And now you will understand why that corner of the chapel has been called "Innocents' Corner," and perhaps you will also understand the reason of the text which I have chosen.

Just as *there is room*, abundance of room, in the Kingdom of Heaven for the little children who have been taken away from those who love them by some fatal sickness or by the cruelty of man, so *there is room* in the great national Church to cherish and preserve their memories—room to record their story in the same stone pages of history that tell us of great events and great men.

IV

COURAGE AGAINST EVIL

Jesus called a little child unto Him.—ST. MATT. xviii. 2.

I AM not going to say much to you, my dear children, about the story from which my text is taken. If you look it up in your Bibles, you will see why the Lord Jesus called a young child to Him on this occasion. He made the child, who did His bidding, stand by Him in the midst of the grown-up men and women whom He was teaching, and He used the child for a text, as it were, of a short sermon, preached, not to children, but to their elders. And in this sermon He told them, amongst other things, that those who would please God best, and be in a true sense of the word the greatest in His kingdom, were those who, instead of always trying to be greater than their neighbours, were content to be humble, trustful, teachable, and submissive to God's will, just as a good child is to that of its earthly parent.

But I am not now addressing grown-up people, but you young children, of the age perhaps of the one whom Jesus called to Him that day. And so I will just break away the six or seven words which I have given you from the story, and speak to you on these alone.

Jesus called a little child unto Him.

I am going to use the words as a kind of parable; that is, we will no longer think of Jesus as on that one day in the Holy Land, beckoning to one of the Jewish children who stood around Him; but we will think of our Lord in heaven, looking down now on you English children, and bidding you, one after another, come to Him. Come to Him, not that He may use you to instruct others, but for your own sakes, that you may be nearer to Him than you now are.

Do you understand, I wonder, what I mean? Or do you ask in what sense can we speak of Jesus calling you children to Him? We mean, do we not, that He speaks to you by a silent voice, heard, not in your ears, but in your hearts, and says, Come to Me; be what I would love to

see you. *Follow Me;* try to grow up, walking after My example, in My footsteps, so that one day you may be with Me in My Father's kingdom.

Now let us try to think to-day of one way, at least, in which you can obey this call—come away from evil, and come to Jesus as He would have you do.

I suppose that if, young or old, we wish to be like our Saviour, we must learn, amongst other things, not to be afraid of doing what is right. We must give up being *cowardly*, just as we know we must cease to be selfish. Jesus Himself endured shame, and contempt, and fierce words, and much reviling, and He bore patiently scourging and torture, and a cruel death. When He calls you to Him, He does not tell you to face all these things. But you cannot possibly obey His call unless you learn in good time not to be afraid of doing right; not to shrink back, or be terrified into doing what you know to be wrong, because you are afraid of being laughed at, or perhaps secretly scolded, or quarrelled with. Boys and girls alike, you need *courage*.

Now, there are many kinds of courage, and you may spend hours amongst the graves and

monuments in Westminster Abbey, learning the stories of those who have not been afraid to face danger and death, because there was something that they held dearer than life itself: gallant soldiers and sailors, some still famous, some quite forgotten, who have died in battle rather than fail in doing their duty to their country. I will tell you the story of one which I have often seen people looking at, but never as if they understood its history. Two great pages, as it were, of black marble stand side by side against the south wall of the nave, telling the names and the lives and the deaths of two friends. They were two young men,* born to wealth and high station, who served under a great admiral, the Earl of Sandwich, more than two hundred years ago, the elder as his first officer, and the younger merely as a friend or a volunteer. It came to pass one day that the Dutch, who were then our enemies, overpowered the English fleet off the coast of Suffolk.† The admiral's ship was in great danger, and most of the crew were killed or wounded. But he kept his flag still flying, and the enemy sent against

* Sir Charles Harbord and Clement Cottrell.

† Battle of Southwold Bay, 1672.

him, first one, and then another, and then a third fire-ship—that is, a vessel loaded with things that would burn fiercely, and set fire to any ship against which she floated. The first and second fire-ships the survivors amongst the English crew contrived to push off, but the third came alongside, and soon the admiral's ship was wrapped in flames, and all was lost. But he held that it was an English commander's duty to go on fighting so long as he had guns and ammunition, so he would not take a boat to the shore, which was not far off. And these two young men both refused to leave him. They resolved to die together, and very soon the gunpowder on board was caught by the flames, and they all perished.

Their commander's body was washed on shore, and buried in the Abbey, in Henry VII.'s Chapel. But the two young men who were such close friends left only their names and the memory of their courage. The story is told in a long inscription on that double monument, setting forth their manly and excellent qualities, beneath which is the picture, elaborately carved in stone or marble, of a vessel set on fire by a blazing fire-ship, with the enemy's ships at a short distance. And I tell you the story because

it shows you a kind of courage which all men in all ages have been ready to honour and admire—the courage which is shown, not in victory, but, what is much harder, in defeat.

But there is yet another kind of courage to which Jesus calls us. When first the religion of Christ was making its way in the world, those who professed it, those who would not worship the gods of the great Roman Empire, were treated as the worst of offenders, and were often put to death—a death as cruel as that of their Master, Christ. Fathers, mothers, sons, and sometimes even, as I shall show you, quite young girls, had to choose between renouncing Christ, and suffering vile treatment and horrible tortures and death. And they remembered how often Jesus had said that those who would follow Him must be ready to endure all for His sake, and how silently and patiently He Himself had borne insults and pain and even death. And this thought gave them courage of quite another kind to that which makes the brave man fight, even when beaten, for his country which he knows will honour him. They learned a courage which enabled them to bear suffering and death that seemed to lead to no earthly honour, but which

had to be borne, amidst the scorn and jeers of all the world. This is a courage which is much harder to find, yet hundreds and thousands of men and women, and even young girls, were ready to die amidst taunts and revilings rather than deny Christ. You have most of you I expect, heard of the Coliseum at Rome: a vast amphitheatre, the shape of a circus, with seats rising one above another in tiers, and enough to seat many thousand spectators. Most of you no doubt, will see it some day, for much of it has endured in a very wonderful way, in spite of the nineteen centuries and more which have gone by since it was first begun by the Emperor Vespasian.

You can still see the dens all round the amphitheatre under the first row of seats, where the wild beasts, lions and tigers, were kept, which were let loose to devour the poor Christians as a show to amuse the Romans.

These things happened quite early in the history of the Christian Church; but the memory of them did not die out, and by degrees very beautiful stories grew up about those early Christian martyrs, and went the round of the world. Some of them are extremely fanciful,

and many of the most beautiful of them are fancies rather than facts, but they hold together in an interesting way the sweet and precious memories of a time of suffering.

I wonder if any of you know how the name Catherine first came to England? Our early Crusaders brought back from the east the story of a young princess, who, at the age of fourteen, gave herself to Christ, and was baptized into His Name. She refused to marry a powerful emperor, for in a vision she thought that the Infant Christ had placed a ring on her finger, as a sign that she was to wed no one, but to serve Him. The story is too long to tell you the whole of it, but she was sentenced to be torn by revolving wheels, fitted with sharp blades, which would tear her body to a hundred pieces. And when these wheels were consumed by fire from Heaven, she was scourged with rods, and finally beheaded, and angels, said the story, carried her body to Mount Sinai, where a monastery was raised over her tomb, which remains to this day.

Again, there is the story of St. Margaret, which is also a strange one. A young girl of this name was very weakly, and was sent to live with her nurse in the country for the sake of the fresh air.

And as she sat on the hillside watching the sheep, she thought of the great Shepherd, Jesus Christ, of whom her nurse had told her, and she resolved to serve Him. And all her family, even her father, turned against her, and she had to endure dreadful tortures, so dreadful that even the tyrant who ordered them hid his face in horror. And then in her dungeon, it is said that Satan came in the form of an open-mouthed dragon, and tried to frighten her, but she boldly faced him with a piece of wood, cut in the shape of a cross, that she had by her side, and drove him away. Very soon afterwards she was taken out, and went joyfully to her death by beheading. The name of Margaret comes from the Greek, and in that language it means a pearl, and is also, as you know, another name for the common daisy. And I will tell you how the name came to England. One of those descendants * of King Alfred, who after the Norman Conquest became doubly dear to Englishmen, was born in Hungary, a very far-off land, and received the name of Margaret, then unknown in England. And she came to her native land, and sojourned for a time

* Margaret Atheling, granddaughter of Edmund Ironside, married Malcolm Canmore, King of Scotland

at the court of William the Conqueror, and married the King of Scotland, and her daughter became, in due time, Queen of England.*

And the English people, groaning under the yoke of the Norman kings, looked fondly to the line of their ancient sovereigns, and called their children far and wide after the name that was then quite new.

In Henry VII.'s Chapel, if you look up high enough, you will see, just below what we call the clere-story windows, a row of small statues in richly carved niches. Some few are missing, but the greater number remains, and they are all figures of saints, martyrs, and others, who were supposed to have suffered for their confession of Christ. Amongst them, if you look carefully, you will find St. Catherine and St. Margaret. St. Catherine has the head of the tyrant who persecuted her below her feet, both her hands are broken off, and one of the broken wheels is by her side. They both wear the heavenly crown of martyrdom, and St. Margaret is thrusting a cross into the dragon's mouth. There is another statue

* Queen Matilda, wife of Henry I., the only princess of Scotland who ever shared the throne of a King of England.

of a girl holding a book in one hand, and carrying a basket on her other arm. It is the figure of a young girl named Dorothea, or Dorothy, and she has a very lovely story, which, like the two others which I have told you, is rather an allegory than a piece of history. Dorothea was brought before a heathen governor who said, "You must serve our gods or die." And she replied, that she would gladly die and go to Christ; and when further questioned she said that Christ's dwelling was in Paradise, where grew heavenly flowers and fruit. And she was much tempted and terribly tortured, and finally sent to be beheaded. On the way to the place of execution, a young man who had heard her words, said to her in cruel scorn, "Send me some of your heavenly Bridegroom's fruit and flowers." And as she was kneeling to receive her death-stroke, an angel brought her a basket of apples and roses, such as no earthly garden ever bore. And when she was dead, the Angel took them from her to the youth, and a new life came to him, and he too embraced Christianity, and died as a martyr.

Now there is much, of course, that is extravagant and incredible in these three stories. It is

clearly against the teaching of the gospel that people should worship any human being as a kind of goddess, in the way that men worshipped the memory of these girl saints. But you, as well as I, can understand how these tales represent the kind of spirit which could and did inspire even young girls to suffer anything rather than deny Christ. They are all three stories of courage and resistance to evil example, and the legend of St. Dorothy's fruit and flowers may remind us that God has in store better things than the fairest which earth can give, for those who are true to Him.

I am going to take one more story from the images of stone of which I have already spoken, and this we may call a story of *unselfish* courage. Among these figures in Henry VII.'s Chapel, is that of a young man with a broad-brimmed hat marked with cross-keys, one hand pointing to a spot on his leg, and a dog fawning on him by his side, with a small loaf in its mouth. It is a beautiful story, and it comes from the Middle Ages, a much later time than the others which I have been telling you.

A young boy felt whilst still a child that Christ called him, and he resolved, instead of

going, as so many did, into a monastery, to do as Christ did, and to go about the world relieving the sufferings of his fellow-creatures. Before he was twenty his parents died, and left him vast possessions. He remembered how Christ had once told a young man to sell all that he had and give to the poor, so he sold all he could and gave it to hospitals, and left the rest under his uncle's care. Then he started off, dressed as a pilgrim, with a staff and those cross-keys as a sign that he was going to Rome, the city of St. Peter. And on the way he came to a city where the plague was raging. The hospitals were overflowing, and the very streets were full of the sick. Instead of hastening away, as many would have felt it quite right to do, he stayed and nursed the sick; and such a blessing, it was said, was given to him, that wherever he came he seemed like an angel of life, and those whom he visited were healed.

And then he journeyed on to other cities, equally plague-stricken, until he reached Rome itself, where also a fearful pestilence raged. So he spent years going thus from place to place, tending the sufferers. At last, in one city, as the young man left the hospital, his own turn came; a fever burned within him, and as he placed his

hand on his leg, he found the fatal sore which was the sure mark of the disease. He lay down in agony in the street, but was told that none who had the plague might lie there, as they would infect others. So, leaning on his pilgrim's staff, he crawled to a wood, and lay down to die. But, says the story, his faithful dog daily brought him food, and a good man, some said an angel, nursed him until he grew able to begin his travels again.

And the time came when, thinking that the Lord Jesus whom he had served would soon call him home, he made his way to his old country and his own people.

But he was so worn and wasted and changed that his friends did not know him, and he was actually brought up as a spy before his own uncle, with whom he had left some of his money, and in his own home. And he thought, says the story, that it was God's will that he should suffer as Christ did, under an unjust sentence. So he was silent, and was sent to a dungeon, where he languished for five years, and at last died. And the very day that he died it was discovered who he really was, and he was laid in his grave by his sorrowing uncle amidst the tears and lamentations

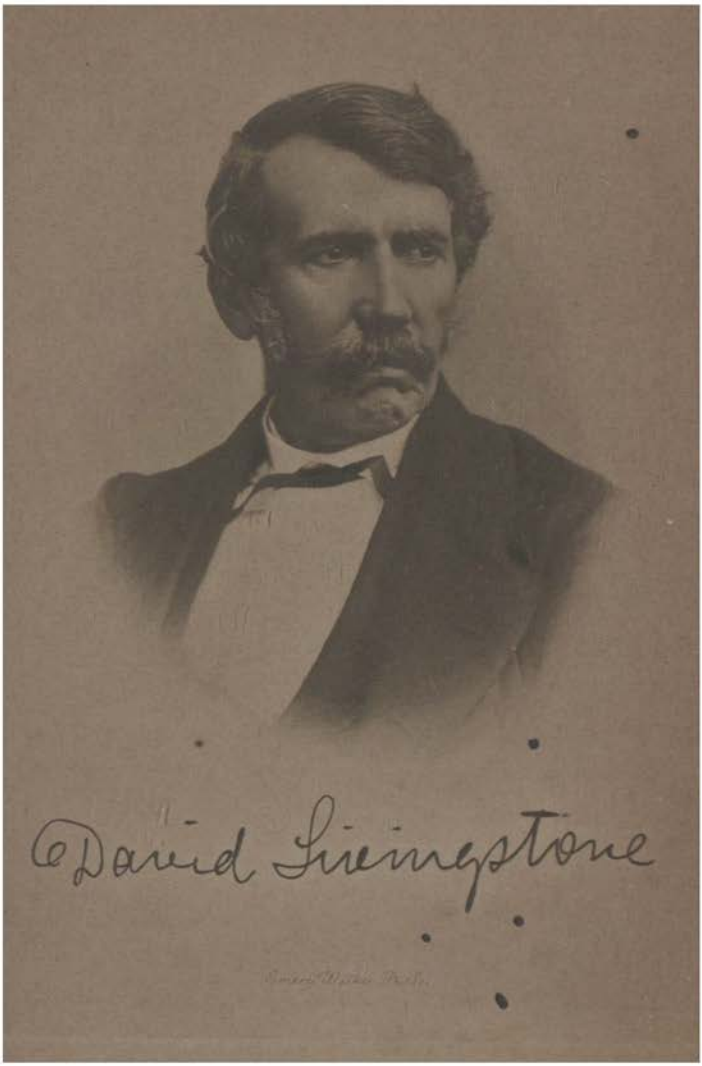
of the whole country-side. This man is known as St. Roche, and you will find churches and chapels called after him in many parts of Europe.

It is a curious tale, and I do not suppose that we should consider his silence to be quite the right course for him to have taken; and yet what a lesson of simple endurance and of sacrificing all for Christ lies under it! It is easy to smile at parts of the story of St. Roche, but how hard to learn to sacrifice even a little that is our own or to run any personal risk for the sake of others, or to bear quietly the slightest shadow of unjust blame!

I have, perhaps, kept you rather long with my "sermons in stone," as I might call them, for the legends I have told you are all taken from the stone carvings in this Abbey, but if they will help you to learn one of the things to which Christ calls you, *courage against evil*, I shall not feel that they have been preached in vain.

Before I close, I should like to remind you that there is quite another meaning which my text may bear. *Jesus called to Him a little child.* My dear children, many of you may have had to

lose brothers and sisters, companions, playmates of your own age, perhaps older or younger, but still children. They have left behind them sorrow and mourning of which you are too young to know the full extent. But, after all, to be with Christ, is it not of all things, if only we have tried to do His will here, the very best? They have been called away from this life, from earthly homes, to a home, a fair haven that we cannot see. And in the midst of our grief, and our grief may be very bitter, we must try and remember the full comfort and blessedness which can be found in those words, *Jesus called a little child unto Him.*


David Livingstone

V

DAVID LIVINGSTONE

In journeyings often, in perils often.—2 Cor. xi. 26.

I am going to-day, my dear children, to take for my sermon the history of one of those who have found their last resting-place beneath the pavement of Westminster Abbey. And I am going to try to make you feel how much we may all learn from a story, true from beginning to end, yet in some ways more marvellous than any tale of adventure which you have read and listened to with wonder and interest.

When you pass through that great open space of the Abbey which we call the Nave, you will very likely see some visitors standing by the side of a black marble gravestone, which lies almost in the centre of it. It is the grave of David Livingstone, the great missionary and explorer of the Continent of Africa. The story of his childhood, his youth, his manhood, his

work, his death, his very funeral in this place, are all so full of interest that I can only attempt to tell you of very little, and leave you to learn the rest elsewhere or as you grow older.

Let me begin by telling you something of his childhood—so unlike the life which any of you lead, that I feel sure that you will not find it a dull story. David Livingstone was born in 1813, and he was reared in a very humble home, the child, as he was fond of saying, of poor, but pious and honest parents. His parents, as is far more common in Scotland than here in London, kept up the memory of their forefathers very carefully, so the little Livingstone learnt by the fireside of his cottage home how his family came from the Isle of Ulver, off the coast of Scotland, near to Iona and Staffa ; and how his father's grandfather had fallen in the Battle of Culloden, fighting on the beaten side—the side, that is, of the Stuarts. But the Livingstones' home now was at Blantyre, a place small in those days, populous now, on the banks of the Clyde, about seven miles from Glasgow.

The little boy's day for listening to stories soon came to an end. At ten years old, by which time he had already learnt much at the

village Sunday school, he had to help to earn his own bread; and for many years, from six in the morning until eight in the evening, with some short spaces allowed for rest and meals, he was at work in a cotton factory. How strange a training, we should be inclined to say, for a great explorer of unknown lands, mountains, lakes, and rivers! And how different a life from yours! Very few holidays, incessant daily work. But the boy's thirst for knowledge was insatiable. At eight o'clock, when his day's work was over, he was off to an evening school, learning Latin with as much delight as some of you would take in reading or listening to some pleasant story. In later years he would tell how, amidst the din of the machinery and the whirr of wheels, he used to keep a book open, poised on part of his spinning-machine, on which, as he passed to and fro, he could glance, always for less than a minute at a time. As he grew older, and left the evening school, he taught himself—it would be difficult to believe it had not his after-life shown the stuff of which he was made—the elements of botany and geology, and spent any rare holiday that came in scouring the country round for specimens of plants and fossils.

From what I have told you so far, some of you may be tempted to regard Livingstone as a mere bookworm, but this would be the greatest mistake. There is not one of the bravest of soldiers or sailors, who had to face more terrible and wearying perils than this studious child had to pass through later in life. He is one whom all would unite in placing amongst the bravest of the brave; and I may remind you that there is nothing for the greatest hero to be proud of in having despised knowledge, or industry, or study. I must not linger over the story of his childhood, but it is well, I think, that you should have this peep into the life of a factory boy who grew in time to be so truly and deservedly honoured. And to the end of his life he looked back very cheerfully and very happily to his boyhood; and he often said that if he had to begin his life over again, he would wish to pass it in the same lowly manner, and to go through the same Spartan training.

Of his life at the University of Glasgow I will only tell you this much: that, brought up, as I have said, in a pious and God-fearing home, he had been stirred in his soul as he grew toward manhood by reading a book on Missions

in China; and he had set his heart upon becoming one day a missionary. So, as Scottish youths have done before the time of Livingstone, and still do, he kept all that he could save from his earnings in six months of the year, to spend them the other six months in studying at the University of Glasgow.

Here he lived in a lodging for which he paid, and thought it as much as he dare pay, half-a-crown a week, working hard at Divinity and at Medicine, the latter subject being particularly useful to him later on; and forming friendships with men who, like himself, became famous in after days, and who remained his friends whilst his life lasted.

But I must hasten on to tell you that Livingstone came in due time to London, and was accepted as a future missioner by the London Missionary Society; that he worked hard at his studies at Ongar in Essex, and also as a medical student at Charing Cross Hospital. A fellow-student, who himself afterwards became a well-known missionary, tells us how one day he and young Livingstone came to the Abbey, and wandered about together looking at monument after monument, "little thinking," he adds,

"that one of them would one day be laid to rest, amidst the lamentation and reverence of the civilized world, beneath its floor." There is one little incident which I will tell you of this time in his life, because it may encourage those, even the youngest, who fail at times and are left behind all the others, even where they have really tried hard. This future leader of missions, whose voice was heard preaching the Gospel to tribe after tribe throughout Africa, quite failed in his first attempt to preach at home. He was almost pronounced to be unqualified to go out as a missionary, so complete was his failure, but his motto all through life was "Patient continuance in well-doing," and the words "Try again" were always on his lips when he seemed, as he often and often did, to be quite failing. Do not you forget them.

And so, more than half a century ago, a little before Christmas, David Livingstone sailed for Africa—China was closed against him by war. On the voyage out he made friends with the captain, who taught him the use of the instruments by which lunar observations could be taken, and by which the exact place of a ship upon the trackless ocean, or of a traveller in an

unknown land, could be determined. What he learnt in this way on board ship, and afterwards at the Observatory at Cape Town, was not only invaluable to him in his wanderings, but was also of use to the whole civilized world, for he sent back the journal of his travels to England, with a full account of all the information he gained. No kind of knowledge ever came amiss to him. The Old and New Testaments he read over and over again, year by year, and at one place where he was detained in solitude, he tells us how he read the Old and New Testaments through four times over. Quotations from the poets of England, Scotland, and America, were always on his lips all his life.

Livingstone had not landed long in Africa before he felt an earnest desire to travel northwards from Cape Town into the interior. He felt that it was not his mission to remain among those who were already converted, but to press forward inland, to bury himself, as he said, among the natives, learn their language, win their confidence, heal the sick among them, preach the gospel to them in their own houses, and try to train up native teachers who would spread the knowledge of Christ among their brethren. And

in a wonderfully short space of time he had travelled hundreds of miles in the interior of Africa, not on a horse or a mule or a pony, but on the backs of oxen. Wherever he went he won the hearts of the natives by his gentleness and his kindly humour. On one occasion he went out to aid the natives in a lion hunt, for they were much beset by these wild beasts. Then it was that a wounded lion sprang on him, seized him by the left shoulder, shook him and crushed a bone, and only dropped him to attack a native convert who came to his aid. He was a man of great physical as well as of moral courage, and this is only one of the many perils through which he passed.

Soon after this he married the daughter of Dr. Moffat, by whose advice he had turned his face to Africa. And it was in Africa, after a time, that Livingstone and his wife had for some years the only approach to a settled home that ever fell to their lot. They both equally devoted themselves to teaching the natives in their own district, and these, together with their chief, whom Livingstone had won over to Christianity, looked up to them as their father and mother.

But they had bad neighbours (Europeans, I

grieve to say, though not Englishmen), who made it impossible for him to send native teachers, as he longed to do, into the district that lay beside them to the east. In his dealings with the Boers he was destined to encounter perpetual difficulty, but he and his wife, and their young children with them, explored the country to the north, and they travelled far in a waste of sandy desert. Here it was that their poor children, who had enjoyed much of the expedition, suffered terribly from want of water; and he tells us of their joy when at last they heard a bird chirrup, and when their dog barked on finding a spring. It was at this time that Livingstone began to feel in the depths of his heart something of the horror of slavery, a sense of pain, a heart-ache which never left him. He saw tribe after tribe selling into hopeless slavery, not their own children, but those raided from neighbouring tribes, in return for guns and gunpowder, cotton goods, and other things brought from Europe. He felt that little could be done for Africa until the natives had been taught to abhor such dealings, to live at peace with one another, to cultivate their land, and to exchange its produce for what they needed. It was borne in upon him that to do

this was the one work to which God had called him. His children were now growing up, and he and his wife agreed that rather than let them live among the sights and scenes, the evils and wickedness of heathenism, she should take them home, and he should remain awhile till he had explored and found some way to the coast for better traffic than that of the slave-dealer, and, as he greatly hoped, a better missionary settlement for them both to return to. So they parted at Cape Town, and he once more turned his face northward.

And it was on this solitary expedition that he accomplished much which has made his name famous. Onward he went, seeing at every step the horrors of slavery and heathenism; now a procession of slaves passing, carried off from their houses; now a little girl escaping from the raiders and flying to the woods, to be devoured by wild beasts. Livingstone himself suffered terribly, facing dangers at least as great as that of an encounter with an angry lion. Yet wherever he went he gained a strong hold on the affections and respect of the natives, who had never seen a white man before who preached to them the very simplest truths of the gospel.

After a while, as he said, the love of Christ carried the missionary where the slave-trade had carried the slaves, and with twenty-seven natives he pushed on to the north-west, through scenes of greater danger and hardship than he had ever passed through before, until he reached the sea-coast at Loanda.

Here he found himself amongst Europeans, Portuguese and English, by whom he was kindly received, and who were much amazed at the feats he had accomplished. At this point he might have returned to England in a steamer, but he had promised his native followers to take them back to the Barotse country, whence they came, which, with much difficulty, he did. And having left them safely in their own homes, this great explorer resolved to try and find a road, if not to the West, then to the East Coast of Africa. If you look at a map of that continent, you will understand something of the distance he had to travel. You will see the great river Zambesi. Well, all along that river he made his way, through a region which a white man's foot had never trodden before. And in the course of his journey he came upon the great falls of the river, which he named the Victoria Falls, after his

Queen. And so, after weeks and months of trial and danger, he came down at last to the Portuguese settlement on the coast at Quilimane, and he embarked for England.

Sixteen years had passed since Livingstone had left his native country. He had travelled over ten thousand miles of African ground, and he had taken careful astronomical observations, so that he could fix the exact direction on the globe of all his wanderings.

You may guess what a joy it was for his wife and children to see him once more as Christmas Day drew on. From the Queen herself down to the very humblest of his countrymen, all were ready to welcome him. Perhaps the reward for his labours which gave him the greatest pleasure during his time in England, was, that on his visits to Oxford and to Cambridge, he so touched the hearts of the young men there, that they founded the mission to Central Africa, of which some of you may have heard—the cause in which so many noble-hearted men have since laboured successfully, and for which many have laid down their lives.

I have so far only related to you one of the three great chapters of Livingstone's life in

Africa. Of the remaining two I have not time to tell you very much. On his second expedition he was no longer alone. He began his missionary work on the East Coast of Central Africa, a country now well known, but then unvisited. The first mission which came out to help him was that headed by Bishop Mackenzie.* Their difficulties were terrible, and Livingstone had an additional and heart-breaking sorrow in the death of his wife, who had joined him. And now the horrors of the slave-trade seem to have entered into his very soul. Day by day he had to see and hear of shocking massacres as a regular and necessary part in the capture of slaves. Discouragement and failure met him on all sides, but his devotion to his work was unfailing. He had raised a large sum of money in England, and spent it in having made at home and sent out to him in pieces, a steamer which was called the *Lady Nyassa* for the navigation of Lake Nyassa, but, to his great grief, it was found impossible to get her up so far as the lake. He himself, without a captain or an engineer, navigated

* The beginning of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, temporarily dispersed after the death of Bishop Mackenzie in the following year.

the boat as far as she would go with three white men beside himself, seven natives who had never been on the sea nor seen a steamer, and two faithful native boys, one of whom was afterwards with him when he died.

Livingstone paid one more visit to England to see his children, but he felt that his work was still unfinished, and he soon returned to the East Coast of Africa. Everywhere, when he landed, he saw signs of the slave-trade, skulls and bones, and the corpses of poor women and children, who, when they grew tired on their march to the coast, were just stabbed by their captors, or tied to trees and left to die, so that they should not hinder the progress of the rest.

He pushed on, hoping to discover the sources of the Nile, finding fresh lakes, fresh streams, and everywhere fresh signs of the horrors of the slave-trade. A report reached England that Livingstone had been killed. This was proved to be false, but it was true that he had been deprived by death or desertion of the majority of his followers, and had been left alone, sick, and almost without clothing.

Then at that moment came relief. So strong was the interest taken in the whole English-

speaking world in the fate of Livingstone, that in 1871 one of our kinsmen in America *—may you who are young not live to see the day when we shall cease to regard Americans as our kinsmen—sent out an expedition to search for him, and at its head he sent one who has since become so famous as the explorer of the "Dark Continent."† Henry Stanley found his way to Livingstone on Lake Tanganyika, and you can imagine the feelings of gratitude and relief upon the one hand and of exultation on the other, when these two great explorers, one the missionary whose work was nearly over, and the other, the world-famous traveller whose work was yet to come, met face to face. And now for four months they were together, and Livingstone had with him one who was to him as a son, who supplied his needs and cheered him beyond words.

They parted at last, for Livingstone heard a call which he could not put aside, saw a hand that beckoned him on to do his work. He still

* Mr. Gordon Bennett, proprietor of the *New York Herald*.

† The late Sir Henry Morton Stanley, G.C.B., died May 11, 1904.

longed to set at rest the minds of men as to the springs from which that river* flowed which had borne Moses on its bosom. Again he had to confront the greatest difficulties. He and his little band of followers had to make their way through boundless swamps, across flooded rivers, in incessant rains; but such was the spell that he cast over his faithful party, that they did his bidding, listened to his teaching, and carried him when he was too sick to walk and too weak to ride. And it was on the 1st of May, just one year before he died, he wrote the words that are inscribed on his tomb: "All I can add in my solitude is, may Heaven's rich blessing come down on every one, American, English, or Turk, who will help to heal this open sore of the world."

Livingstone had twice crossed the entire continent of Africa, and his work, both as a missionary and an explorer, will live to all time, though he himself constantly doubted his own achievements. It was in the centre of that "Dark Continent" that the end came—came probably in the manner which he would have liked best, could he have chosen. He and his

* The Nile.

followers reached, one evening in torrents of rain, the village of Ilala. Early the next morning they saw him kneeling, as in prayer, by his bedside; but he was dead.*

Now hear what these faithful sons of Africa did. They buried their leader's heart there where he had died, in the country for which he had given up his life, but his body they dried in the sun, and they carried it through every conceivable danger to the sea-coast. His remains were then brought by sea from Zanzibar to England, to be buried in the grave in Westminster Abbey where they now lie. There were some who hardly believed the story, and doubted whether they were really the remains of Livingstone; and so the body was examined, and there was found that fractured bone of the arm crushed by the lion long years before.

Here at last, on April 18, 1874, in the nave of the Abbey, in the presence of a vast crowd, the body of that great servant of God was laid to rest. We are told that "when Jacob Wainwright, the negro boy (who had accompanied his master's body), threw the palm branch into the open grave, more moved by the sight of the dead

* May 1, 1873.

man's coffin than by the vast assemblage, which, from floor to clerestory, crowded the Abbey, it was felt that the Lanarkshire pioneer of Christian civilization, the greatest African traveller of all time, had not laboured altogether in vain."

One of the most solemn and impressive of all the funerals of great men that have ever been celebrated beneath this ancient roof was that of him who, at the age of many of you children, was the little book-loving factory boy. He was the first martyr in the cause of Christianity in Central Africa: there have been many followers since. How much has been done, how much is still being done, to stop the horrible slave-trade that wrung his soul! How many missionaries have laid down their lives and are still laying down their lives, in the effort to bring the Divine message of peace on earth and God's love to man in that dark region!

Do not, when you roam among the memorials of the great dead, forget the work and the example of the one and only missionary who sleeps beneath the pavement of Westminster Abbey. No one has a right to bid you go and work among the heathen; that call may come

to one and another from God's Holy Spirit. But we may all bid you learn to feel for the spiritual as well as the bodily wants and needs of those who are less happily placed than you are yourselves.

VI

ANTHONY ASHLEY COOPER, EARL OF SHAFTESBURY

It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.—ST. MATT. xviii. 14.

Be of good cheer, oh my children . . . For I sent you out with mourning and weeping; but God will give you to me again with joy and gladness for ever.—BARUCH iv. 21–23.

ON former occasions I have tried to interest you in the lives and the works of some of those who lie buried, or have had monuments raised to them, in Westminster Abbey, and even of those whose stories have been merely commemorated in the stone carvings. For I wished to make you understand how much we might learn from the memory and the example of great and famous men, and even from the legends of those who were worshipped as saints in a dark and ignorant age, with a worship due only to God. I have

The Earl of Shaftesbury

taken you back in the life of Edward the Confessor, to the very birthday of this Abbey Church, and I have told you something of the work of David Livingstone, the great missionary and explorer, in such recent history as that of the last century. To-day I am going to talk to you a little of things which happened not much longer ago than in the days of your grandfathers, and even more lately than that. I am going to tell you something of the sad sufferings to which English children could be exposed so near our own times, and something also of the pains taken by many people to put an end to these sufferings, and especially by one man of exceeding goodness. Last time I spoke to you it was of one who himself had begun life by working in a cotton factory in Scotland, who spent a great portion of his life in fighting against the slave-trade in Central Africa, and now I am going to tell you of one who was the pioneer in an equally noble mission in our own country.

If you look on the right-hand side of the great west door of the nave, you will see a marble statue of Anthony Ashley Cooper, seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, who was born in 1801 and died in 1885. And the inscription below his

statue says that he was "endeared to his countrymen by a long life spent in the cause of the helpless and suffering." "Love—Serve" is the motto chosen to put below this inscription.

The stories which I shall tell you this time are neither lovely nor pleasant, but they are absolutely true. And, sad and dismal though they be, they have a brighter side, for they show us what infinite good can be done in the world by those who will fight against all that is cruel and all that is selfish; by those who are not content with being shocked or horrified, but who try their best to aid the sufferer and to protect the ill-used. I will tell you something of the work done by Lord Shaftesbury for the poor children of our own country, and you will see how great this work was, and how sorely it was needed. First, I must take you back more than a hundred years. It is a long time ago, and he whom I have just named to you, though he lived to be a very old man, was not yet born. But it was about that time ago that the great invention of the steam-engine, of which you have all heard, was first applied to the manufacture of things which you all see, or wear, or handle every day of your lives; that is, of cotton-stuffs of

various kinds, handkerchiefs, dresses, and so on. What a curious subject you may think to talk about in a sermon, but listen a little, and you will see what I mean by it. Up to that time cotton—which, as you probably know, comes from a plant that grows far beyond the seas—was made up into the different articles in separate cottages, by hand, as we say; that is, on hand-looms by distaffs and spindles. But about a century ago* it was found possible to spin cotton, as we say, and to make cotton cloth in vast quantities by machinery; and steam, it was found, could do nearly all that hands did before, and do it much faster. Little further was needed from human labour, except nimble fingers to arrange the cotton and feed with it the great and powerful machine which could work all day and all night without feeling weary or stopping for food or rest.

Hence sprang up that great manufacture of English cotton which is now sent all over the world, and has been, from that time to this, one of the great sources of the wealth of England. And it is to this use of machinery in the manufacture of cotton that some of the greatest of English towns owe their existence. It is this

* This address was given in 1885.

which employs thousands and thousands of our countrymen. Surely, you will say, this was a very good and great discovery. And so it was, but, alas! for a time the results were not quite so good as they should have been. For, unfortunately, it was found that children, quite young children, from six to nine years old, and even younger still, could be trained to use their fingers so well as to do nearly all that was required to assist the machinery.

There were then, as there always are, many poor people in England, who were very glad that their children, even when almost babies, should earn their own bread and cost their parents nothing, and indeed bring them home their wages.

For a time even humane people thought these cotton factories, these vast buildings in which mere children worked in hundreds side by side with the great steam rollers and machinery, a blessing not only to the rich, but to the poor.

But soon the consequences became very terrible. These cotton machines, as I have said, could work all day and all night, were never sleepy nor hungry, nor in need of rest, and as long as they worked they required human hands to guide them, and little hands and fingers did

the work as well as larger ones, and cost far less to hire. And as the years went on, hundreds and thousands of poor young children were doomed to lives of cruel slavery. They were sent in numbers, some from country villages, some from workhouses, even from London workhouses, to live close by the mills in Lancashire; sometimes with their parents, sometimes without; in unhealthy rooms in poor closely packed houses. Every morning at five o'clock these little things, often not more than four years old, were taken out of bed and led off to work in a stifling atmosphere, amidst the hum and roar of machinery. They were scarcely allowed to stop their work even for meals, never for one moment to play or rest or to amuse themselves; and they never saw the sunshine except through the high windows of the factory. At night they were taken back weary and fagged; they were taught nothing, and could enjoy nothing, but just grew up in ignorance, without family life or affection, barely seeing their parents, if they had any, and living the life of hard-worked slaves and worse than slaves.

And this state of things went on for years and years in a Christian country, a country which

was growing rich by help of these children's labour, and a country, moreover, which was meantime sending out missionaries, as we have seen in the life of Livingstone, to give the poor black slave his freedom. But by degrees good men began to cry out and to protest, and they were told that if they interfered all the wealth of England would be destroyed. Nevertheless, they persevered, and did something, though not very much, to shorten the hours of work for these poor boys and girls.

At last one of these, who had worked as a leader in the cause, spoke very solemnly about it to Lord Shaftesbury, whom I named to you just now, and called upon him to devote himself to the cause of these children. Lord Shaftesbury was then called Lord Ashley, as his father was still alive. He was a young man, a member of Parliament, with every prospect of what we call a great political career before him, the prospect of being a Minister of State, and of having a large share in the Government of England—a position which, as you know, is one of great importance, and very much coveted. And after much thought and earnest prayer, Lord Ashley—or Lord Shaftesbury—did devote himself to what he felt

to be the cause of Christ his Master. From that time—and this was long ago, shortly before Queen Victoria came to the throne—he spent his whole life, until he died at the great age of eighty-four, in aiding, wherever he found them, the poor, the ignorant, the distressed, and the helpless, and, above all, the young. No man, I suppose, has ever lived to whom the children of the poor owe so much. But the condition of things which Lord Shaftesbury and those who helped him found when they began to look into it, was fearful beyond words. I read the other day a letter purporting to be from a Spanish gentleman * who had travelled in England at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and had visited one of those great cotton factories of which he had heard so much. He saw these poor children working as I have told you, working, working, plying their little fingers with what he calls "an unnatural dexterity" amongst these great iron rollers, and the throbbing, whirring hum of wheels going round and round in perpetual motion, which made him feel dizzy.

* Written in reality by Robert Southey under the pseudonym of a Spaniard in order to expose the condition of the English factories.

He listened silently, and then he came out, and thanked God that he was not an Englishman!

But the miseries of children were not confined to the cotton mills. When Lord Shaftesbury and his friends began to stir in the matter, they found a worse state of affairs in some of the other trades. The pins, which we all use, were worked up and had their heads placed on them by little children, who sat bent over their task in the shape, it was said, of the letter C, for twelve, fourteen, or even more hours at a stretch, and who were sold to work for weeks and months to pay their parents' debts. The little helpers in calico-printing were constantly kept at work the whole night, and beaten and shaken to keep them awake. I once read the evidence of a man, who said that as he came home from his counting-house at midnight, he had met these little things being taken crying to their work. The coals which filled the grates were often drawn along dark, dismal mines by young children, boys and girls alike, who toiled on for hours, creeping on all fours, with a chain round their waists, in sloppy, dirty galleries, not more than two feet high. The chimneys, again, were swept by poor little climbing boys—how often have I met them

myself as a child!—whose lives were only less miserable than those of whom I have already spoken.

In the middle of the last century a poem was written which moved the hearts of many of us who are now old. It was called "The Cry of the Children," and it was written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the wife of the poet Robert Browning. You will probably read it some day, and you will see how it speaks of all the other young things, the fawns, the lambs, the young birds, having a bright and happy time in youth, but of the young children of England as—

> ". . . weeping bitterly!
> They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
> In the country of the free."

And it was against one and all of these terrible evils, which many good people seemed to think a necessary part of civilized life, that Lord Shaftesbury fought until he had conquered them. It was a very long struggle, but by degrees, and in time, laws were passed, and have been ever since in force, which entirely forbad the employment of children of a tender age, and limited very strictly the number of hours during which older children—that is, above thirteen—should

work. These laws insisted upon their going to school, forbad altogether their employment in mines, and, in fact, put an end to an amount of cruel suffering of which no Englishman should think without a blush of shame.

And now see how good came out of evil! These inquiries made as to the state of the poor brought to light much that was very terrible; but the story touched the hearts of good and earnest men and women far and wide, and they remembered the words of our blessed Saviour—*It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish.*

When they began their work they found horrible ignorance: children who had never heard of God above, nor of Christ; to whom the name of London, and even of the town nearest to them, was unknown; who knew nothing of any one king, or person, or place on earth, outside the narrow dreary corner in which they worked.

The increasing consciousness of this dreadful state of things, of children growing up as savages and heathen, struck a chill into people's hearts. It made a number of good men and women form

themselves into what was called the Ragged School Union. And they tried, and tried with vast success, to bring together the poor little outcast children, the waifs and strays of London and the great towns, to civilize and instruct them, and help to prepare them for a better life and for honest labour. As a result of these discoveries, and of the work that was being done amongst the children, all England began to wake up to the need for giving instruction to the poor in other ways, of which I need not speak to you now. But, above all, the well-to-do classes in England, those who had comfortable homes and happy firesides, began to feel what a mass of misery of all kinds there was below them, and how much might be done to remedy it. Then began the formation of Homes, and Refuges, and Industrial Schools, in which neglected children could be sheltered and taught and trained, and not allowed to grow up as thieves and outcasts. Again, training-ships were started for destitute boys. The *Chichester* and the *Arethusa* were the first of these, and here boys who would otherwise have been doomed to lives of sin and misery, are trained as seamen, and sometimes turn out the very flower of our brave

sailors. For fine and noble characters are often found among these ragged creatures. "The deeper you go," said Lord Shaftesbury himself, "the brighter the jewels that you turn up."

Then also began the desire to improve the homes of the poor, and one idea which found most happy fulfilment was to brighten the dull houses and the lives of those who lived in them, by encouraging them to cultivate in their windows the flowers with which God clothes the face of the earth, and which too many of them could never see, as you often see them, growing wild in the fields or blooming in pleasant gardens. Year after year there were happy gatherings here in Westminster, in the large square outside, which we call Dean's Yard, or in the old garden through the cloisters, which belongs to the Abbey, when a flower-show was held by the Window Gardening competitors, of plants reared by themselves, and sometimes in the most squalid slums of the neighbourhood. And to these gatherings the old Earl, as they called Lord Shaftesbury, always came himself to distribute the prizes. If you had been there you might have seen little children from the courts and by-streets in

Westminster, which, thank God, for the most part are no longer what they were, held up to receive their prizes from his hands, always accompanied by a kindly word of interest and encouragement.

Yes, good came out of evil. Those special sufferings of the children of the poor of which I have told you no longer exist. But there is still plenty of misery amongst them and great sufferings of other kinds. Sometimes, too often, these come from the bad habits of those who should know better, from drunkenness and improvidence. There are parents, horrible as it sounds, who will starve their children almost to death, neglect, ill-treat them, turn them out of doors, pawn their clothes to buy drink for themselves. And there are other grown-up people besides parents who are cruel and heartless. And so it was found necessary to form a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which has done and is doing a very good work, and of which I expect most of you have heard. It was at a meeting of this Society that Lord Shaftesbury made his last speech in public before he died. His name will be always remembered in the great work which he did for

the children. We still have the Ragged School Union coupled with the Shaftesbury Society, and one of their good efforts, for which they want as much help as they can get, is to send the children, and especially the sick and crippled children, away to the sea or to the country for a short holiday in the summer. And you must remember that there is much poverty and misery also among very sober and industrious people, owing often to sickness, or to want of work, and therefore to want of wages. Children, now, as I have told you, all have to go to school, and a number of them have to go without breakfast, sleepy, faint, and miserable, to learn their lessons, and with perhaps very little in the way of dinner to look forward to.

It is not pleasant, my dear children, to tell you of these sad things, some of which are still happening in our own days. Yet I think it is well for you to hear something of the miseries of life, which in your own little way you may be able to help to alleviate. I remember that when I and my brothers and sisters were quite young children, a very great many years ago, as you may fancy, our hearts were stirred by the stories we heard, some of which I told you in my

address on Livingstone, of poor black slaves torn from their homes and carried across the sea, in order to make our sugar in the plantations, and how for a time we all refused to eat sugar, because in our childish way we thought that by so doing we were helping the negroes. I also remember with what joy and interest I was taken as a little boy to see and to be spoken to by the great William Wilberforce, whose monument is now in the Abbey, and who was to those blacks what Lord Shaftesbury was to the young white slaves here in England.

It is well for us to know that there is a dark and ugly side to human life; it is well for us to feel pity and compassion; and it is better still to let that feeling so work in us that we cannot enjoy the good things which God has given us without trying to help those to whom they are denied. And when you give your help, my children, to any good cause of this kind, try not to do so merely because for the moment you feel uneasy at the thought of suffering, and you want to relieve your minds by giving something so that you need think no more about it. But rather because you know you were baptized into the Name of your Lord

and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who went about doing good, and Whose Spirit, if you seek it, will lead you to follow His great example, and to do the will of your Father which is in heaven. You will have understood the choice of my first text. And the second, which I have chosen from the book of Baruch, seems to me might well have been the voice of some mother who saw her children suffer, and who, when they were taken from her by death, believed that God would give them to her again "with joy and gladness for ever."

VII

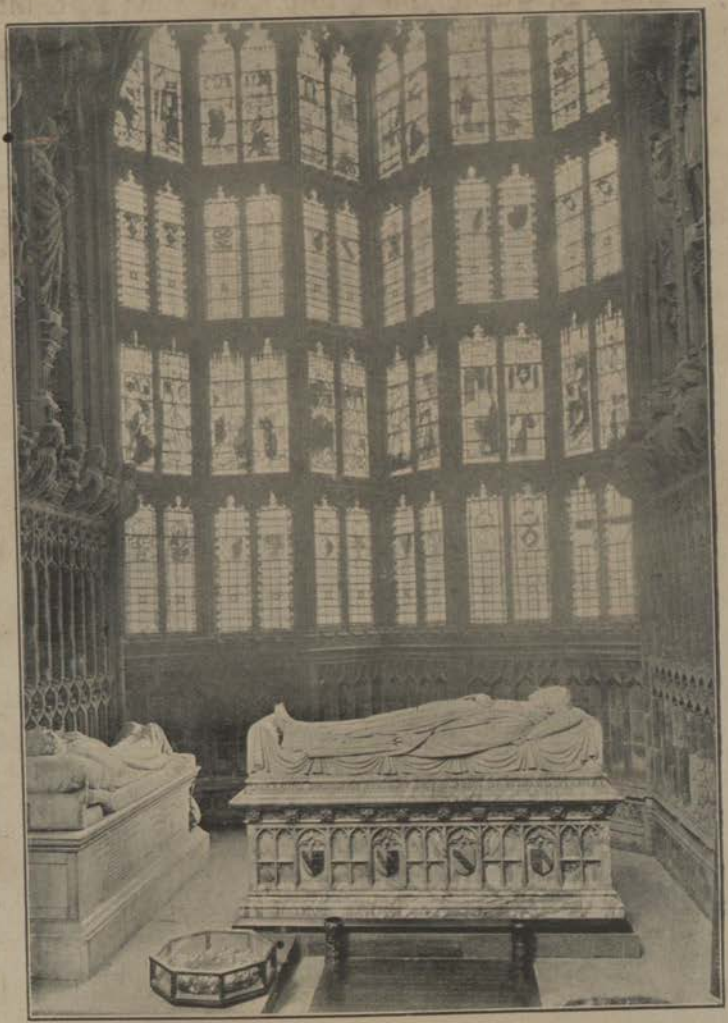
PERSEVERANCE.

"*Let us not be weary in well-doing.*"—GAL. vi. 9.

LET me tell you the meaning of the text I have chosen—the one lesson I should like you to carry home to-day. *Let us not*, says the Apostle St. Paul—*let us not be weary in well-doing*. He says, that is, do not easily give up, but do your very utmost, each one of you, in trying again and again to do, and to say, and to think what you know to be right, and in trying hard not to do, not to say, not to think what you know to be wrong. Do not be tired or easily disheartened because you often, very often perhaps, find it hard to please those who love you by resisting evil temper, or idleness, or selfishness, or any of the bad ways into which you find it so easy to slip; but try to go manfully up the Hill Difficulty, of which you have, perhaps, heard or read in the story of Christian in the "Pilgrim's Progress." It is a hill, my dear

children, which, young or old, we must all climb, if we would ever reach or enter the Palace Beautiful, or a better place even than that.

In former years I have often chosen, for our example and yours, stories taken from the lives of those who were buried in the tombs of this Abbey many hundred years ago. To-day I shall ask you to listen to a story which any of your older friends might tell you, who were showing you some of the graves of those who have been laid to rest here within times which they themselves can well remember, or at whose funerals, perhaps, they themselves were present. It is the story of a Scottish king who lived nearly six hundred years ago, and who, if he had come to Westminster then, would most certainly have been put to a cruel death as a rebel, and his body not buried here beneath some stately tomb, not buried anywhere, but exposed in hideous fashion to frighten and terrify his friends. But now, though the body of Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, lies far away in Scotland, you may see more than one of the stories of his life, told or just hinted at, in the painted window placed over the grave of the lady whose memory is still exceedingly honoured here. She bore the name and



DEAN STANLEY'S TOMB AND LADY AUGUSTA STANLEY'S WINDOW.

[*To face p.* 100.

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was descended from the Robert Bruce of whom I am going to speak. She bore the name Augusta Bruce, a dear and cherished friend of her Queen and ours, until she became the wife of the much-honoured Dean who first began these services of Innocents' Day.* And when her death plunged him in grief he raised a window of coloured glass above her grave, in each different portion of which there is something painted to remind us either of her ancestors or of her family, or of her own good and Christian work among the sick, the poor, and the suffering. If ever you are taken by those who know this Abbey into what is called the chapel of King Henry VII., you will pass the tomb of that king himself, about whom and those buried in the same grave much might be told you; and just beyond you will see the tomb and effigy of him of whom I have just spoken—this lady's husband, Arthur Stanley, long the honoured Dean of this Abbey. And if you look as you stand there, downwards, you will see a gravestone, often, very often, with fresh wreaths or simple flowers lying upon it; and beneath it lie two coffins, one that of his wife of whom I spoke. Then, if you will look up at

the window of which I spoke before, you will see in quite the highest part, if you will look carefully, a picture of a spider's web in the left-hand corner at the very top. What, you may well ask, has a spider's web to do with Westminster Abbey, or with those who are buried here; or why should we come to church to-day to listen to a story about a spider?

Let me tell you the story; it is a very interesting one in itself, and you will see, I think, why I tell it to you to-day. It comes down to us from the days of King Edward I., of England, whose tomb, perhaps, some of you have seen in the Chapel of King Edward the Confessor, after whom he was named by his father. No two kings in the whole world could be more unlike than these two Edwards—the one, round whose lofty shrine all those warrior kings and famous queens lie, was, as I have before told you, the most child-like of kings; and the other was the great statesman, and the great soldier, and the pitiless conqueror, first of Wales and then of Scotland—Edward I. He it was who brought here the famous coronation stone on which the Scottish kings had been crowned, and on which every king and

queen has been seated at their coronation from that day to this. He had already put the Scotchman, Sir William Wallace, to a traitor's death after a trial—if trial we can call that mock trial in Westminster Hall—and had his body cut to pieces and exposed in ghastly fashion on spikes on London Bridge. But the task of conquering Scotland was a very hard one even for that great soldier; and the leader of those Scottish rebels and traitors, as King Edward called them, was Robert Bruce, of whose hairbreadth escapes and desperate adventures you will find a charming account in Sir Walter Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather," a book written nearly seventy years ago,* and read in their childhood by many who are now grandfathers having grandchildren of their own. This Robert Bruce was the bravest of soldiers and the most formidable of fighters. Few men could use his sword; few faced him in fight.

But the task of driving out the English invaders seemed far too hard for him. Even among the Scottish nobles he had many foes, and though he had been crowned King of Scotland, his cause seemed at last quite lost. He had to

* This sermon was preached in 1894.

part from the Queen, his wife, he had to part from friends and supporters, and at last leave Scotland, and take refuge in lands lying off the coast of Ireland. There there came to him the terrible news that his wife had been taken prisoner, and his youngest and much-loved brother, Nigel Bruce, had been put to a terrible death as a traitor. All seemed lost. The only course left open to him seemed to be to give up Scotland, give up his crown, and to try and make his way to the Holy Land, where Jesus came with the message of peace on earth, and try to atone—such was the idea of those days—try to atone for the sins and faults of his past life by fighting against the Saracens, and endeavour to drive them out of the place where Jesus once walked and taught. And as he lay on the miserable crib in the unswept cabin, his eye was caught by something he saw above him. It was a spider hanging on a thread which it had spun, as spiders do, from its own body, and trying to swing itself to another beam from that on which it had fixed its thread, and so to reach a foundation on which it could weave its web. And he saw the spider try and try again, yet try in vain, and he thought of his own vain

efforts to overcome those English conquerors, and to win freedom for Scotland. Poor down-hearted Bruce could not take his eyes off the spider; and six times he saw the insect fail, and he remembered, with a sigh, the six fights in which he had striven in vain against his own foes; and he thought the spider seemed as tired and as beaten in his trials as he had been himself. But he watched and watched, and he saw it still persevere, gathering up its strength and preparing for one more attempt. Then Bruce said to himself, "If the spider fails this time, I will take it as a sign that I will fail too, and I will give up hope and go back to Scotland never more." Had this happened, the history of Scotland and England might have been much changed. But the spider did not fail in this seventh attempt, but swung itself across and reached the beam at which it aimed, and made fast its thread, and was now free to run across backwards and forwards and spin its web as it wished. And Bruce took heart. The story seemed to him a sign from heaven of encouragement and cheer. And he too persevered, and instead of giving up and going away to die fighting Saracens, he went back to Scotland, and

tried yet again and again, till at last, after the death of King Edward I., he won that great victory at Bannockburn, and became not in name only, but in reality, the ruler and acknowledged King of Scotland. And the day came when one of his descendants * arrived in England to be crowned as King of England and Scotland in this very Abbey, and now lies buried only a few feet from that picture of the spider. And our Queen,† and her children (our present King), and her children's children are all descended from that very Robert Bruce whom another of her ancestors, Edward I., would most certainly have put to a terrible death could he have laid hands upon him.

I do not think that in any other church, my dear children, I should have chosen this story as a kind of parable to encourage you to persevere, persevere, persevere; but it came into my mind not many days ago, as I stood by the grave of Dean Stanley, and looked up to the window above; and I remembered those distant days in which, as a child myself, I read the story

* James I.

† This address was delivered during Queen Victoria's lifetime.

of Bruce and Douglas. And why do I tell it to you to-day? You to whom I speak will never be called upon to fight nor win for yourselves a crown; but you will see something of what the lesson teaches. You may one day, to-day, to-morrow, any day, be trying to do something that is very hard to do. You may one day or another have to fight with enemies of quite a different kind from those who so nearly drove Bruce to despair, but whom he at last quite overcame. You have tried, perhaps, or will try in vain, to overcome some fault, or to do well something which you feel you ought to do, and yet find very hard to do, and you are vexed, or will have vexed those whom you ought not to vex, and you will have grieved the Holy Spirit, Who speaks to you and to all and every one of you in your conscience, and you feel weary of trying and failing. It is of no use, you say, I shall never cure myself of this, or, I shall never be able to do that; I will give it up, and try no more.

My dear children, when this thought comes to you, as come it may, think not only of our text, but also of the words which follow it, *Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season*

we shall reap, if we faint not; but think also of that old, old story which has come down to us from six hundred years ago, and try in another way to do as Bruce did then, and resolve to try again, and not lose heart even if you have failed six times or six times six. Ask in your prayers for help to persevere.

The story of Robert Bruce is now known far and wide, and his name is held in honour alike in Scotland and England, and in lands that were then quite unknown to Scotchmen or to Englishmen. More than one of his name and lineage has been sent to govern India as Viceroy of our Queen. But for yourselves what shall I say? You will not win honour through distant ages and in other lands, because you fight to overcome something you know is evil, or to do something you know is right. But if you succeed you will win favour not only of friends and parents, here, but of our Father in heaven, Who sees all the secrets of our hearts. It was not only to grown-up people that the words of St. Paul were spoken. Even quite young children may and sometimes do perform very noble actions, and give up all, everything, even life itself, for the sake of

others. It was only this last summer that in one of our great London hospitals, lay the body of a little boy ten years old who met his death by drowning. He had seen another little boy, still younger than himself, who was wading along the shallow edge of the Thames, suddenly step into deep water, and heard his cry for help; and this little boy of ten years of age, with no one else to help, saved him, and brought him to land. Then, overtired, I suppose, with the great effort he had made, he slipped from off the raft which they had reached, and was washed by the tide into deep water under a steamboat, and was drowned, drowned before the eyes of the little lad he had saved, and of a man who hurried up —too late, however, to save him, but who told what he had seen. Now no one will celebrate or tell to future ages that story. I owed my own knowledge of it to a slip cut from a newspaper and sent me six months ago, by one who had lost by death, some years ago, her only and much-loved little boy. Yet we feel one and all that we honour that brave child, because a voice within tells us that he did a deed and died a death which must be dear to Him Who laid down His life for us. No one will give you a

great reward, perhaps none at all, for striving and striving to conquer some evil or to do some good, which cost you many efforts and many failures to conquer or to do. No nation will pay you the honour which Scotland and England paid to that Robert Bruce. But every such effort will be dear to Him to Whose service you were dedicated as unconscious babes. You will be aided by Him if you seek His aid; and you will win at last—be sure you will with His help—the battle against your enemies. And may God's blessing be largely given you, and may you and yours learn fresh lessons from the teaching of Jesus Christ and His Apostles, and from the lessons which we may so often learn from the lives of those who have gone before, whether lately or long ago, to the world which lies beyond the grave.

VIII

THE APOSTLE ST. JOHN
THE NEW COMMANDMENT

The Disciple whom Jesus loved.—ST. JOHN xxi. 20.

ST. JOHN the Apostle, who is also the Evangelist, is set apart from the other disciples and Apostles by a very high title: *The Disciple whom Jesus loved.* How did he earn it? That is a question which we cannot attempt to answer entirely, but what we are told of him helps us, I think, to understand how it was that he deserved this proud distinction.

He was one, as we know, of two brothers, James and John, and probably the younger of the two, as his name always takes the second place. Their father's name was Zebedee, a fisherman on the Lake of Galilee. Their mother was called Salome, and she was one of those Galilean women who were devoted to the Saviour, who followed Him to Jerusalem, who

stood by His cross, and who helped to lay Him in His grave. And these two brothers, James and John, together with Simon Peter, were often our Lord's chosen companions when the other disciples were left behind. He took these three, and these three only, with Him to the chamber of death, where the little maiden lay, whom He raised up by speaking to her two or three simple words in her native tongue, and so restored her to her father.

These three, and they only, were with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and they again, alone, were by His side in the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. There must have been some reason for this choice. Yet we know that this disciple, St. John, had much to learn before he became what he was in his old age—the Apostle who entered more fully than any of his brethren into the very spirit of his Master, Christ; the Apostle who left behind him teaching so full of lessons of gentleness and love, that we, your elders, no less than you children, have also much to learn before we can live up to that teaching. And the Apostle's very failings, and the rebukes which they drew from his Master, may teach us much.

For instance, we are told that once when he and his brother were travelling with Jesus in Galilee, on the way to Jerusalem, some Samaritans—people who, though they worshipped the true God, yet in many grave points were not members of the Jewish Church, who would not even worship in the Temple at Jerusalem, but had their own temple elsewhere—refused to give shelter to these pilgrims to Jerusalem. These two brothers, whom their Master had already, perhaps for the vehemence of their way of speaking, surnamed *Sons of Thunder*, wondered that He did not call down fire from heaven on these inhospitable and churlish heretics. But they were rebuked by Him for such language, and shown that they did not understand their Master's character or work; how that He came, *not* to destroy, but to save; *not* to take vengeance on those who insulted Him, but to win their hearts and to change their lives.

And it is good to remember that so well did St. John learn the meaning of this rebuke, that it was he who told us in later years, how his Master compared Himself in His last discourse to the Good Shepherd Who lays down His life for His sheep, and Who had other sheep which

were not of the fold of the Jewish nation, but which one day should hear His voice.

On another occasion these two sons of Zebedee came to Jesus, and joined in their mother's entreaty that when their Master should enter into His Kingdom, they should have the chief places in it, and sit the one on His right hand, and the other on His left. It seemed a very selfish request, and their companions were naturally indignant with them. But our Saviour answered it in a solemn and moving manner. "*Ye know not what ye ask*," He said. He rebuked very gently their self-seeking, and warned them, in language which they hardly understood at the time, that if they were to be with Him in Heaven, they would have to drink deep of the same cup of suffering which lay before Himself. He reminded them also that the Son of Man—that is, He Himself—came not to look for the chief place, but to give His life to save His people, and His true servants must not push or struggle to get before their fellow-servants, but must be ready to deny themselves, and to give help and place to others.

And these two brothers, young fishermen, who at that time were always together, and

whose mother was so anxious that they should one day share a higher place together, were soon to be separated; James being the first to die, and John the last to linger of all Christ's Apostles; but we believe that they were re-united in the heavenly kingdom.

I have told you of one and another occasion upon which these two brothers, James and John, incurred their Master's reproof; but what I wish you to notice is that the reproof did its work. Judas Iscariot was also warned and rebuked, but in his case the reproof merely awakened resentment, and he only became the more ready to betray his Master, to ruin his own soul, and to hand down his own name to everlasting infamy. The sons of Zebedee took rebuke from Him they loved in quite another spirit. James, the elder, was, as I have said, the very first of the disciples to die for Christ's sake, whilst John, the younger, who survived them all and lived to a very great age, is now remembered, not as the *Son of Thunder*, not as the fierce denouncer of the Samaritans, but as the gentlest, and tenderest, and sweetest of all the Apostles, the *disciple whom Jesus loved*, who followed his Master to the last, stood by His Cross when He died, to

whose care, when on the Cross, Jesus commended His mother.

There are one or two stories of St. John which I should like to tell you, that have come down to us, not from Holy Scriptures, but from other writings of a later age, some being merely traditions. You may remember my telling you in a former address how, in the form of a beggar, St. John once asked alms of King Edward the Confessor, and of how, receiving from him a ring, he sent it back to the King some years later, as a sign that he called him to join his Master and himself in a heavenly kingdom. There is another touching story told of the Apostle, in which there is nothing, I think, which we may not believe, although I cannot answer for its truth. It is said that while St. John was living at Ephesus, a city in Asia, where he is believed to have written both his Gospel and his Epistles, he took great interest in a young man whom he had won to the faith of Christ. But in St. John's absence, perhaps during the time that he was banished to the rocky island of Patmos, where he wrote the Apocalypse, or the Book of the Revelation, the young man, whom he had left in the care of a certain bishop, broke away, and going from bad

to worse, he at last became the leader of a wild band of ruffians and banditti. And St. John, when he came back, was sore distressed, and he rode off into the forest where the young man and his lawless companions lived, and did not rest until he had found him. And the young robber chief, instead of encouraging his men to attack the solitary traveller, fled for shame when he saw him. But the old Apostle called him back, and implored him to listen, and he so wrought upon him by his soft and tender pleadings, that the young man fell on his knees and hid his guilty right hand, and wept tears of shame and despair. But St. John embraced him and cheered him, and seizing the blood-stained, guilty hand, he kissed it, and so won him back thenceforth to a Christian life of repentance and good work for others. The "Son of Thunder" had grown, you see, into the Apostle and Missionary of Love. And the story shows us how, while there are some who sin against the laws of God and man, and whom no kindness seems to touch, there are others who may be won back by love and forbearance on the part of those for whom they feel real reverence, as well as gratitude and affection. There is another pretty story of how he once

astonished a hunter, who, passing by with his bow bent, in pursuit of game, saw the great Apostle feeding and fondling a bird, a partridge or a quail which he had tamed. And he told the huntsman how, just as the latter would unbend his bow when the day's sport was done, or it would certainly be spoilt, so he (St. John) unbent his mind by indulging his affection for his favourite bird.

Many of you may like to remember that the Apostle whom Jesus loved was said to have had room in his heart for kindness and tenderness to dumb animals, even to a small bird which could not so much as reward him by its song.

It is very natural that many stories have grown up round the memory of the Apostle who was so much loved and revered, and in some of them there is no foundation, even, in fact. In St. John's own Gospel * we are told that the disciples misunderstood our Lord's answer to a question of Simon Peter's, and that a saying, quite unfounded, went about to the intent that *that* disciple (meaning St. John) should never die. I remember when I was quite a young child, reading a story of how the Roman Emperor

* St. John xxi. 20–23.

ordered him to be thrown into a caldron of boiling oil, and how he came out of it uninjured as "from a refreshing bath." There is to-day a little chapel in Rome called "San Giovanni in Olio"—that is, "St. John in the oil"—which was built in the sixteenth century, on what was supposed to be the very spot where this miracle is said to have taken place, from which, of course, it takes its name. Another tale told how, when by the same orders, deadly poison was mixed with the wine which he was to drink at the Lord's Supper, St. John drank it unharmed; and sometimes in old pictures he is painted as holding a cup or chalice with a serpent issuing from it, to represent the miraculous removal of the poison. And in nearly all the pictures which represent him as the Evangelist, you will see beside him the figure of an eagle, which was interpreted as figuring the height to which he soared in understanding, and as suggesting to us the mind of Christ and God in his Gospel and Epistles. As time went on wilder stories still grew up and were believed. Some told how the earth above his grave at Ephesus still heaved with the motion of his breast, as he lay, not dead, but merely sleeping in the ground until the

second coming of Christ; others, that soon after his burial he was called from his grave, and taken up alive to the Saviour who loved him. Such legends as these, curious and beautiful as some of them may be in themselves, do not, however, teach us any very useful lesson.

But there is one lesson, the greatest which St. John ever taught, the one which he taught all through his life, and which is especially connected with a beautiful story of his old age, a story which we have no reason to believe is not entirely a true one. When the Apostle, who has sometimes been called the Apostle of Love, was very old, he became extremely feeble, and was unable any longer to walk. So he was carried by his friends into the Congregation of Christians in the City of Ephesus, where he had long been loved and honoured as the last of those still alive who had known the Lord Jesus. And when they had brought him there, they asked him to address the assembly—to preach, as we should say, a sermon; and all that St. John said was, *Little children, love one another.* Those who were present very naturally thought that this could not be all that he had to say, and they asked him for something more. But the venerable

Apostle only repeated the same words, *Little children, love one another.* And once again the people begged for more, for a longer farewell sermon, as it might well be called, from one who was so old that he addressed them all as children. They wanted some last instructions, some helpful advice from him who was so dear to his Lord, and so beloved by his friends, and who in the natural course of things must so soon leave them. But once again St. John said the very same words. And when they asked him why he would say no more, he replied, "because what I have said to you is the commandment of our Lord, and he who faithfully fulfils it has fulfilled the law of Christ."

So, my dear children, you will have an answer in this story to such a question as—what is the shortest sermon that has ever been preached? And you may reply, that of St. John—*Little children, love one another.* Again, if you were asked how many commandments are there, you would readily enough answer "Ten;" but if you were asked if there were not eleven, some of you would, I hope, remember the words of the Lord Jesus on the evening before He suffered, words which I want you never to forget, and which are

recorded by this same St. John in the Gospel which bears his name. *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* So you see the very shortest sermon which was ever preached, and what we are told in the New Testament is the *new*, or, as it has sometimes been called, the *eleventh*, commandment, handed down to us from the life of the Lord Jesus, are one and the same thing. Both bring to us, young and old, the same message, both teach us the same lesson. It is not a very easy lesson to learn. We are all, children and grown-up people alike, apt by nature to think first of ourselves, our own pleasure, our own comfort, our own safety, in small things as in great. Parents and kind friends will, as you know, do and bear much for the children whom they love dearly, as part of their very selves. But to deny ourselves, to give up our own wishes, for the sake of those around us, sometimes for those whom we do not greatly care about, is a lesson often harder to learn than any which may be taught you in the schoolroom.

And you must remember that it was a *new* commandment which Christ gave to His

Disciples, and to all who have since called themselves Christians. In the Old Testament there are many warnings against doing evil to others, against speaking evil of them, against oppressing the poor or the weak, against persecuting the good. And there were also promises made to God's ancient people, of One who should be King over the hearts and lives of men, though He were humble, despised, and rejected.

But it was not until Jesus Christ had come, had been born at Bethlehem, had grown up in His parents' humble and human home, had spent His life in doing good, and in teaching others so to do; not until He had suffered poverty, shame, pain and death, for the sake of the weak and sinful beings over whom His heart yearned. that the truth was fully proclaimed—the truth which tells us that we cannot be dear to God, our Father, cannot please Him, unless we imitate the example of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as He also hath loved us.

Greater love hath no man than this, saith our Lord, *that a man lay down his life for his friend.*

We are not all called upon to die for others,

indeed, it is to comparatively few that the opportunity of the final sacrifice of self, this supreme and exquisite proof of love, may be granted. But we may all see what daily love and care for others means in the life of our Saviour Christ, and in the lives of those, far better than ourselves, who have most closely followed Him.

There are many great and good men who have gone before us, whose chief claim to honour is that they have obeyed this New Commandment, have been pitiful to the weak, tender-hearted, trying to help those who could give them no return. And so they have striven to follow the example of Christ their Master, and have shown that the last short sermon of St. John had borne fruit in their hearts. And the New Commandment found no more beautiful exponent than the Apostle St. John, both in his life and in his teaching.

May you also strive to attain something of the spirit of him who served Jesus so faithfully and so well from youth to old age, who took reproof so wisely, who overcame his faults in such a manner that he won his Saviour's especial love and friendship; of him who loved his fellow men so tenderly and so truly, that he has left a

name dear to all Christians in all lands and in all ages.

May you, my dear children, learn, whilst you are still young, to walk at what distance you may be able, in the footsteps of the *Disciple whom Jesus loved.*

IX

BROTHERLY LOVE

Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.—EPHES. v. 1, 2.

TO-DAY, my dear children, I am not going to tell you any stories, as I have been in the habit of doing in former years. I am going to ask you instead to listen to a few plain words of advice, from one who, in his old age, would give a great deal, not merely to interest and please you, but also to be of some real use to you; from one who knows that you have your troubles, your temptations, your faults, and your dangers to contend with, quite as much as your elders.

I talked to you last time about the Apostle St. John, the Apostle of Love, and of the New Commandment of our Lord, which He spent His life, not only in preaching, but in practising, which is so much more difficult. To-day I have chosen my text on that same commandment, but

this time it is in the words of St. Paul, in a letter addressed to the Church at Ephesus, of which, for a time, St. John himself had charge. *Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.*

It calls on all of us, as God's dear children, to try to follow, not our own pleasures and our own tastes, but to walk in the footsteps of Christ our Saviour. We may all, young and old, be quite sure that unless we do so, we are in no true sense *children of God*, or followers—that is to say, imitators—of Christ. And we cannot become so without some care and pains and watchfulness over ourselves.

Now, what are some of the ways in which we may at once try ourselves, and see whether we are in any degree endeavouring to walk in the footsteps of our Lord? Let me ask you to ask yourselves one or two questions. What are the faults, the temptations, to which you feel yourselves most liable?

There is, first of all, *selfishness*—the caring much, the caring only, for your own comfort or pleasure, and the caring not at all, or very little, for that of others. This is an evil born with us, and shows itself at all ages and in many shapes.

It is so, as some of you know well, with the *young* of all animals around you. The "birds in their little nests," whom you may have heard spoken of as examples to you not "to chide and fight," have not the strength nor the language to do so; but I fear that none of us ever saw one little unfledged bird forbear to clamour for its full share of food, or willingly give up when hungry one morsel for the sake of a brother nestling. But you are called to a higher life than that of birds, or of the young four-legged creatures with whose ways you are many of you so familiar. You were baptized into the Name of Christ, who pleased not Himself, but who gave up everything for us.

And to help us to overcome this tendency, this instinct of selfishness which we share with all living creatures, was one of the ends which our Saviour had in view when He took upon Him our flesh, bore our trials and our sorrows, and when He died on the cross for our sakes, died forgiving and praying for His murderers.

And there is not a day, there is scarcely an hour, in which you may not give up something for the sake of others, brothers for some younger brother, young boys for some weaker or less

favoured schoolfellow; sisters, for your sisters and companions. Remember how often it happens that you, the stronger or the older among you, may be able to do quite infinite kindness by having the thoughtfulness or the courage to say the kind word or do the kind act for those who most sorely need it; those who want the readiness of speech, or the strength, or the good looks, or other gifts which easily win favour. Ah! you who though still but young are older than the youngest, do not forget what power you have to make miserable and desolate for a time, or to cheer and brighten the lives of some of your younger schoolfellows or companions; how the little word or act of self-forgetting kindness may be the cup of cold water given to one athirst, which our Saviour said shall not lose its reward. And you may do this, not to please those who can repay you again, but simply because you wish to taste the very highest of all rewards, the sense that you are doing something to make others around you happy at your own cost, in the very spirit of Christ your Master, and by so doing winning the love of God your Father. We who see you do so, we who see the boy home for his holidays refusing to let loving sisters

or weaker brothers be the slaves of his whims, and give up all to him, but see in him the spirit of the gentleman in its best sense, giving way to *them*, seeking *their* pleasure, *their* good, we know well that we are seeing one of the most delightful sights on earth, the promise of a Christian manhood, and we turn away with sad forebodings for the future of an exacting, selfish, self-seeking childhood.

And there is another form of selfishness that shows itself mainly on the lips and on the tongue; but we know that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." It is not the attempt to *get* everything for yourself, but it is the constant making yourself, not other persons or other things, but yourself and yourself alone, the subject of all your thoughts and words. Be on your guard against boasting of all you have done, or know, or think you know, or can do. Some of you have heard the story of the great philosopher Sir Isaac Newton, who with all his vast knowledge and immense discoveries, spoke of himself as a child picking up shells on the shore of the mighty ocean, which he had not the strength to explore. The wisest men are generally the most modest of all men,

and the boastful child is too often a foolish child.

And there is also what we may call a negative selfishness, but none the less it is a very real selfishness, and of a kind again, which has to do with words rather than with deeds. We are told by St. John that we must care for others, not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth; that is, not in mere words that mean nothing, not in pretence or sham—learn to detest them! But still you must remember that words often *are* deeds, and may sometimes be as welcome or as cruel as a kind act or a hard blow. If you wish to carry out our Lord's teaching, you will not let those who you know love you tenderly, your parents or your elders, be pained by your never taking the trouble to utter one word of real gratitude or affection. To those of you who are by nature reserved this is often a real effort, but an effort which should be made. There is nothing manly, my dear young boys—let me speak to you as one who has not forgotten his own boyhood—in never showing that you feel thankful for a mother's, or a father's, or an older friend's kindness, and sometimes a heart-felt word or

two will show what you feel for them, not merely in word or in tongue, but in very deed and in truth.

Again, there is *meanness*. I use an ugly word, but you will understand me. It too, shows itself in many shapes. There is, first of all, the readiness to tell an untruth, a lie, plain and direct. Let me hope that this is not a common fault amongst you. You belong to a nation, a race, which does not love lies, which has despised them for ages. Few of you would like the company of those who told untruths, and you would think it, I hope, a thing in yourselves to be thoroughly ashamed of, just as you would of thieving. But there are other kinds of false speaking, or of acting falsely, which you are more exposed to. To keep back something that is true, or to say something that is only half true, or to be silent when you ought to speak, because the truth, if told, would bring blame or disgrace or punishment—to do it, as you would say, in self-defence—this is a very real and great temptation to not a few of you. It is a form of cowardice that many are liable to who would not at all like to be called cowards in the common sense of the word. It is none the

less a cowardice of a very real kind, and when it has once mastered you, it is hard to fight against, and may make you untrustworthy and unhonoured all your lives. Many a brave soldier or sailor, who has faced again and again every kind of danger, can tell the story of a strange sinking of his heart when he first saw on the field of battle, or on board ship, the dangers and pains of war; saw death and bloodshed around him, and heard the cries of the wounded. And he can tell you how quickly and entirely he overcame this panic. But when once we have learned the art of keeping back the truth, or saying what is not true, or practising what we call shifty ways, in look, in word, in act, because we have not the courage to face the inconvenience or the unpleasantness of being quite honest and upright, whatever the consequences,—when once we have learned this, we have learned something that may cling to us and hang about us for years and years, and can only be kept from poisoning our whole lives by very hard struggles, and by secret and quiet prayer for help that we shall sorely need, and that will be given us if we seek it. I would remind you, my dear children, not so much of

the dismal story of Ananias and his wife, but of the gentle pleading of the Apostle of Jesus, who bids his fellow-disciples leave off all falsehood, as the very first sign of their becoming Christians. *Lie not one to another*, he says, *seeing ye have put off the old man . . . and have put on the new man*—have laid aside, that is, your life as heathens, and assumed the name and life of Christians. And so, children, boys and girls alike, let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, as becometh Christians.

One word, too, I must say of an evil that vexes some of you, it may be sorely, and the pain of which you know yourselves; I mean faults of temper. Some of you are perhaps liable to outbursts of passion in which you do and say things which you would never do and say if you had thought beforehand. You know yourselves that such things *must* not be. Such outbursts cannot be borne with when you have passed infancy.

We must all learn to control ourselves, only try to do so early, before the days come when the ridicule or rough treatment of scornful companions will compel you to lay aside such things. Try to do so for a better reason, to spare pain

to those who love you best, and for the thought of the gulf these gusts of passion make between you and Him who died for you.

Some, again, have a sorer trial to contend with. They are liable, so we might say, from no fault of their own, but from something in their nature, to fits of sullenness. Something said, something done, hurts them, rankles in their minds: they *cannot* put it aside, and they go about miserable and gloomy, thinking themselves greatly wronged. There is little pity, as you know, felt for those who are liable to these sullen moods. Yet such children are in reality much to be pitied, and they should try very earnestly to be freed from the evil spirit, to forget quickly and heartily, to forgive from their heart, any ground for offence, real or fancied, and to try to acquire that gift of a forbearing and sweet temper, which is worth so much more when we have gained it by prayer and effort and watchfulness, than when it comes to us, as it were, in our cradles, by no effort of our own.

I must not say much more, but I should like to conclude with some words of St. Peter's, on two other kinds of that unselfishness of which I have already spoken. *Love as brethren*, he says,

be pitiful, be courteous. Let me take the last first. Remember, that by politeness or courtesy we mean nothing more than showing in our outward manners, often in quite little things, that we think of others before ourselves. True courtesy is often, thank God, seen in children, and it is a delightful sight. It is not such a hard task if you go to the root of the matter. Strive to be glad to make those around you happy, and you will soon learn the welcome secret of true politeness, true courtesy, and find in it no sham piece of artificial polish.

And, lastly, *be pitiful.* Never, never let your after memory when you grow up be stained with recollections of cruelty. It is to boys that I ought, perhaps, to speak mainly here; they need the warning most. There is much which I might say about cruelty to animals; but I would rather end with a very earnest appeal to you to resist the evil spirit to which some of you are liable very early—that of ill-treating, ill-using, bullying, as we call it, those who are younger or weaker than yourselves. Learn to find a joy in tenderheartedness, in obeying the royal law that bids us *do to others as we would have them do to us.* Ah, as life goes on, how those of you who live

to old age will look back through the mist of years, and see shining, as with faces of angels, the faces of one or another who learned early to use the manly gifts which God had given them, to help those who were younger, more timid, or less happy than themselves!

How different is the memory of the coarse or selfish, the brutal or overbearing!

I will only conclude this, my last address to you, with repeating once more the words of my text, which I want you, above all, to try and remember. *Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.*

I hope that not only to-day, but on other and former occasions when I have had the opportunity of addressing you, that I have been able to help you a little to understand what these words mean.

THE END

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